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ROME AP - The captain of the Trans World Airlines jet that was hijacked from California to Rome said today the FBI was responsible for "a fiasco" in New York that "damn near blew us up."

"To say they mishandled it would be the understatement of the century," said Capt. Donald Cook of New York.

He said the plane crew had succeeded in calming the jittery hijacker, 20-year-old Rafael Minichiello, when "the whole thing was blown by the FBI."

The trouble came Cook said, when the hijacked jetliner landed at Kennedy Airport in New York from Denver to refuel before crossing the Atlantic.

"The FBI didn't follow our instructions," Cook said. "Our instructions from the boy-relayed through me in what I think was a fairly calm manner for several hours before we got to Kennedy were that we wanted to be parked at a remote area and wanted nothing but fuel trucks and the necessary equipment."

Instead, Cook said, Minichiello got "very upset" about people around the plane and fired a shot into the ceiling of the plane.

"We were exposed to a fiasco," he said. "They damn near blew us up. That's how they mucked it up."

"Their big problem was technical arrogance," Cook said. "Whoever planned the operation in New York thought that he knew better than the captain of the airplane, who had been keepin; this boy from shooting us for six hours. And there was a very real danger of that. It was a constant danger."

"We felt the FBI overstepped itself," Cook said. "I had him (the hijacker) calmed down."

"We had it pretty well worked out, and I think the whole thing was blown by the FBI, probably by whoever was the agent in charge in New York."

Asked whether he thought he might have been able to talk Minichiello out of going through with the hijacking, Cook said:

"I can't say he would have given it up in New York, but we might have been able to talk him out of it at a later stop, at Bangor or Shannon, or even into giving up without a fight when we got to Rome."

"Along with everything else, we were worried over the safety of the boy, the hijacker. I mean he was really just a little kid. He was operating way over his head and we felt like he'd bitten off a chunk of the modern world that he just didn't understand and couldn't handle, and we tried very hard to make sure that he didn't get himself shot and killed in the process."

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