

COCAINE AIRWAYS

BY NICK SCHOU

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Tosh in Santa Elena, Costa Rica, mid-1980s

When we first spoke, a decade ago, the fear in his voice—the staccato pace, the tremor—was unmistakable.

"I can't talk to you," he said. "This is all classified."

He answered just one question: if he told me what he knew, he'd go straight to federal prison for violating U.S. national security laws.

Then he hung up the telephone.

Two weeks ago, I tracked the man to his home in rural Pennsylvania. This time, he didn't hang up on me. The terror in his voice was gone, replaced by the cheerful nonchalance that maybe just comes with being 69 years old and knowing that your kids have finished college, you're well into retirement, and it's too late for anyone to ruin your life for talking to a reporter about matters that powerful people would rather keep secret.

He laughed when he recalled our conversation a decade ago. He apologized for not answering my questions. He asked me what I wanted to know.

Over the course of the next several days, the man told me his life story.

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William Robert "Tosh" Plumlee was a CIA contract pilot. He worked where the agency sent him. That meant that he ran guns to Fidel Castro in the 1950s, and then, when Castro overthrew Fulgencio Batista, Plumlee ran guns to Castro's opponents. In the 1980s, he flew guns again, in and out of military bases including Orange County's El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, March Air Force Base in Riverside, and Homestead Air Force Base in Florida. The weapons were destined for the CIA-backed Nicaraguan Contras, a right-wing army aiding the agency's war on communism.

On return flights—and this is where Plumlee's story becomes really interesting—he says he flew cocaine back to the bases with Uncle Sam's approval. Plumlee figures he made at least three weapons flights to El Toro in the mid-1980s and says it's possible there were drugs in some of those crates as well. Other pilots he knew told him about off-loading tons of drugs at El Toro.

There have been rumors of such activity for two decades, and they have everything to do with one family's suspicions about a high-ranking Marine officer who committed "suicide" at El Toro in 1991.

All of Plumlee's landings were late at night, and the unmarked airplanes—massive C-130 cargo carriers—were painted dark green. And though Plumlee landed at military installations, the men who unloaded his planes were dressed just as he was—in civilian attire, sporting long hair. Plumlee says he guesses they could have easily passed for drug dealers.

He doesn't know the identities of those cargo handlers. But he's pretty sure they weren't military.

"I was CIA," Plumlee says. "So why wouldn't they be too?"

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He was born in Panama City, Florida, in 1937, where his father worked as a pipe fitter in a paper mill. His family moved to Dallas when he was six months old. At 14 and a half, he forged a birth certificate and joined the Texas National Guard; six months later he leapt to the U.S. Army, which promptly discovered he'd lied about his age and booted him with an honorable discharge, adding that if he stayed in Dallas and came back in two years—this time with his parents' consent—he could re-enlist.

After rejoining the military, Plumlee received flying lessons and was assigned to military intelligence. "They were experimenting with a lot of young people who weren't coming out of prison, but who didn't have a lot of family ties. Basically juvenile delinquents who liked adventure," Plumlee says. "I started flying for a series of companies—Southwest Aero Charter, Intermountain Aviation, Riddle Aviation in Miami, and a few others."

Plumlee would only later discover his employers were funded, if not completely run, by the CIA. His first major assignment: running guns from the Florida Keys to Fidel Castro and a group of students at the University of Havana known as the Movement of the 26th of July, or M26-7. The group was supported by the CIA in its effort to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. "I was making hit-and-run raids in Cuba," Plumlee says. "The CIA was funding it and sending guns and hardware to them, and I was flying those guns in and out of Cuba."

On one such raid, in the mountains of northern Cuba near Santa Clara, Plumlee's DC-3 airplane lost an engine. "We couldn't get out of there," he says. "We made a weapons drop there at a site that had been secured and we landed and couldn't get enough power to get out. We abandoned the aircraft and they took us to Raul Castro's compound. Raul Castro got me off the island. I had coffee with Fidel Castro in the mountains. Fidel Castro gave me a fatigue hat. I thought he was democratic and patriotic and still to this day believe we drove him into this communist deal. All he wanted was tractors."

One of Plumlee's partners in running guns to Castro and his cohorts was a man we'll call "Carlos," an M26-7 member whose sister, along with several others, had been gunned down by Batista's agents in a raid on a Havana safe house. Convinced a Batista agent masquerading as a revolutionary had aided the attack, Carlos spent two years establishing the mole's identity and then lured him onto a gunrunning flight from Florida's Marathon Key to Cuba. Plumlee copiloted the plane. "Somewhere between Cat Cay, southeast of the Keys, and the Cuban coast, the door light went red in the cockpit, meaning the cargo door had been unlatched," Plumlee says. He went back to the cargo area to investigate. The suspected Batista agent had disappeared, and Carlos was re-latching the cargo door. "My copilot told me to get back in my seat," he says. "He told me it was a Cuban affair."

In 1961, two years after Castro took over Cuba, Plumlee went to work running guns to Castro's right-wing opponents. He says he was attached to the CIA's Miami station in a project known as JMWAVE, the agency's codename for anti-Castro operations. "JMWAVE was the first time I knew I was CIA," Plumlee says. He got to be friends with various members of Alpha 66, a group of anti-Castro extremists recruited by the CIA to carry out terrorist attacks inside Cuba. One of those operatives was Frank Sturgis, who later turned up as a Watergate burglar. "Sturgis and I made flights to Cuba together," Plumlee says. "He was a good friend of mine in the Cuba days. We dropped some leaflets over Cuba together and made an air raid over Santa Clara. But when Watergate happened, I hadn't seen him in years."

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Plumlee made numerous flights to Cuba in support of Alpha 66 and other agency-backed groups. "My end was mostly supply stuff," he says. "We would take people out and in, make drops, land and remove people. There was a situation where we removed some missile technicians—defectors—out of Cuba before the missile crisis." He says he was asked to retrieve a few freelance counterrevolutionaries, private citizens who'd launched raids on Cuba. And he flew ABC reporter Lisa Howard into Cuba, where she created a back channel between Robert F. Kennedy and Castro after the Cuban missile crisis. "There was an arm [of the CIA] out there trying to talk peace with Castro during the assassination attempts," he says.

As an ostensibly civilian pilot, Plumlee says he was told to fit in with Miami's anti-Castro contingent. "Nobody actually said 'infiltrate,'" he explains. "But I was undercover, a 'cut-out' used by various agencies, but most of the time the CIA provided logistical support. I got heavily involved with organized crime in Florida. The next thing you know, one of my good friends was John Martino. Johnny Roselli was a good friend of mine. I flew Roselli in and out of Cuba many times."

Martino was a Cuban mob-tied bookie and casino operator who escaped to Florida after being jailed by Castro. Roselli was a Chicago mobster who became involved with the CIA's anti-Castro campaign and later wrote a book claiming the Cuban-tied mafia murdered President Kennedy. (Other books have claimed Roselli was involved in the alleged plot.) His decomposing corpse was discovered in an oil drum floating off the Florida coast in 1976, shortly after he testified about the assassination to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He had been stabbed to death and his legs had been sawed off.

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Plumlee's story stretches credulity. His Zelig-like appearances during many of the most exotic moments of covert U.S. government activity seem implausible. And there's more. On Nov. 22, 1963—the day of Kennedy's assassination—Plumlee says he was standing in Dealey Plaza—next to Sergio Rojas, a military operative.

But what seems to start as a yarn best served from a barstool quickly gains the look and feel of real history: the CIA had received information "that a couple of Cubans were going to fire a bazooka at *Air Force One* in West Palm Beach," he says. "This information came from the FBI. They had information that two Cubans had been arrested with a bazooka. There was talk about Austin, Texas—there was supposed to be a hit on Kennedy."

Both the CIA and FBI, Plumlee adds, were desperate to track down anyone, especially Cubans, who might be plotting an assassination attempt during Kennedy's tour of the southern U.S. And so they sent their Cuba team—including Plumlee—to Dallas.

"We were dispatched to Dallas to check for spotters, to see if we could abort any assassination," Plumlee says. Plumlee flew Roselli and several other CIA assets familiar with the Cuban mafia crowd to Redbird Airport. They stayed at a safe house, he says, and were assigned positions along Kennedy's limousine route.

"This was standard, routine stuff," he says. "Nobody really thought too much about it. Our main task was the south parking lot, south of the [grassy] knoll. The object was to look for the best possible location for shooters, and go unnoticed because we were not supposed to be there. We didn't see anything suspicious."

Seeing is one thing; hearing another. Just as Kennedy's limousine passed the Texas Book Depository, Plumlee recalls that he and Rojas heard a shot from behind them.

"I am familiar with gunfire, and I've said it to Congress and anybody who has a concern about this thing," he says. "We both felt there was a shot that came over our left shoulder where we were standing, from either the parking lot or the triple overpass."

Plumlee doesn't think the CIA or FBI had a hand in Kennedy's assassination, but that gunshot convinces him Oswald wasn't acting alone. "There is no doubt there was a team there to kill the president," he says. "And the fact that there was an abort team tells me there was prior knowledge. But there are people on the Internet saying I flew Roselli and a team to Dallas to kill Kennedy. And to go on a limb and say the dirty CIA planned it all? No, there were elements of the FBI and CIA that tried to stop the assassination."

Things got weirder for Plumlee a week later. He returned to Florida, where he was arrested and extradited to Denver to stand trial on a \$50 forged check. Despite the relatively nominal money at stake, and despite the absence of evidence, "the judge sentenced me to an indefinite stay in jail," Plumlee says. "Then I was sent to the reformatory and the FBI came out telling me if I didn't shut up about what I knew about the Kennedy assassination, I'd never get out of there."

In September 1964, two weeks after the Warren Commission released its report saying Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone gunman, Plumlee says he walked out of prison a free man. "No checks were ever produced written by me," he says. "And I was never asked to testify to the Warren Commission. I never talked about it for years, until the 1970s." That's when investigators for the Church Committee met with Plumlee in Phoenix and took his testimony about the Kennedy assassination.

Plumlee stayed in Colorado throughout the '80s, flying as a commercial pilot with several airlines. Some of his work put him in close contact with people who were suspected of smuggling drugs around the country. When he wasn't flying, he fielded telephone calls from Kennedy assassination researchers and flirted with the idea of publishing a book about his experiences. FBI records from the 1970s document that Plumlee told the agency about his involvement with Roselli and other Cuban mobsters—and about his presence in Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963. But his dream of writing a book on the subject went up in smoke. "My house burned down in Colorado in 1981," he recalls. "The house was firebombed. I got beat up in a bar. There were a lot of papers taken out of the house, and later, I had the IRS all over me. I blamed it on the Cubans."

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The fire that destroyed Plumlee's book project drove him back into the dark world of CIA gunrunning. When friends in Arizona law enforcement learned about his problems, they offered him a job: posing as a drug pilot in an effort to infiltrate the Colombian and Mexican drug cartels then establishing themselves as middlemen in a broad conspiracy to smuggle cocaine from South America into the United States.

According to Plumlee, he and other pilots were secretly working for the Arizona-based Tri-State Drug Task Force. "My contact was the Phoenix organized crime detail," Plumlee says. "The federal agents didn't know about my existence." Plumlee flew under an assigned fake name: William H. Pearson. "All of us ops guys used aliases," he says.

When he first started flying drugs into the United States, Plumlee says he was certain the information he collected—flight routes, drop points and cargo loads—was being passed on to federal drug agents, along with the tons of cocaine he was ferrying. "The whole thing was set up as an interdiction program operating through Mexico," he says. "We were transporting weapons and drugs on C-130s. I was flying drugs into this country and weapons back into Mexico. We were working undercover to log and record the aircraft ID numbers and where the landing strips were. The object was to log these staging points and flyways. But then Iran-Contra came along, and we started flying guns back and forth and drugs into the southwest U.S."

Iran-Contra, as the covert operation Plumlee had stumbled into would later be known ("Iran" being a reference to the Reagan administration's secret missiles-for-hostages exchange with the Iranian government), began as a covert effort to arm the Nicaraguan Contras. The Contras were a right-wing army partly created by the CIA to topple the country's Sandinista rebels, who took over the country during a popular uprising in 1979. When the U.S. Congress banned any aid to the Contras, Oliver North, then a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps working for Reagan's National Security Council, secretly continued arms shipments. In 1986, the crash of a C-123 aircraft in Nicaragua that was owned by Southern Air Transport and piloted by a friend of Plumlee's, Bill Cooper, exposed the covert operation.

"The drug interdiction program was used as a cut-out for the CIA," Plumlee says, referring to the Tri-State Drug Task Force. "We had a meeting in the Oaxaca Café in Phoenix, and I was asked if I wanted to fly C-130s. The next thing I know, I was working for the CIA . . . The way that happened is that I was the last person who would ever be thought to be CIA because of all the past stuff that had happened with me not getting along too well with the FBI or CIA."

Plumlee says all the pilots involved in the CIA's guns-for-drugs exchange were given special numbers to push on their aircraft's transponder, codes that would give them the greenlight as they entered U.S. airspace; a U.S. Customs balloon on the Mexican border functioned as the traffic cop. "Someone was sanctioned to clear us across that border," he says. "It takes quite a coordination to do that." There were times, he says, when the balloon was conveniently brought to earth—just as Plumlee or some other CIA pilot neared the border—and other times when they'd simply broadcast the specified numbers on their transponders. "We don't see anybody within 50 miles of us," Plumlee says. "I say that's CIA."

Nothing about the deal was conventional. Even the source of weapons was masked: in the early 1980s, the U.S. Army's 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions staged maneuvers in Honduras to prepare for an unlikely invasion by neighboring Nicaragua's left-wing Sandinista government. "The [Army] took military equipment and certified it was destroyed in airdrops," Plumlee says. Although the military told the Government Accounting Office (GAO) that the weapons were a total loss, the equipment was in fact transported back to the U.S and retrofitted before being flown back to Central America and into the hands of the CIA's Contra army.

The weapons "were taken back to the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station and the U.S. Army Proving Grounds near Yuma, Arizona, because they needed to be repaired," Plumlee says. "There were weapons, helicopter parts, stinger missiles. I remember three specific trips to El Toro and one, possibly—I'm not really sure—of drugs going in there." He's sure of a few things: "These flights were all between 1 and 4 a.m.; that's when the [control] tower was thinly staffed. The planes were dark olive drab with camouflaging. We didn't fly marked aircraft. If we got hit with customs interdiction aircraft, we didn't want any photographs of tail numbers."

Plumlee says the pilots officially worked for civilian air charters under contract to the CIA, including the infamous Southern Air Transport and Evergreen International Airlines. He was always paid in cash, usually about \$5,000 per flight. Once he landed at El Toro, Plumlee says, he'd taxi the C-130 to the southwest side of the field, close to Interstate 5.

"I had long hair in those days—bushy hair," he says. "I looked like a drug runner. There was nobody in uniform offloading our aircraft. I figured they were CIA spooks. When you see people like that on a military base in the early morning, unloading, I say that's CIA. It's an assumption on my part, but it is based on a preponderance of evidence."

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At some point in all the excitement, however, it became apparent to Plumlee that the drugs he and other pilots were transporting into the U.S. weren't actually being seized by the DEA. Nor was anyone in a hurry to close down the Mexican airstrips used for running drugs and guns. And no one seemed eager to use Plumlee's intelligence to throw a net over the cartels. Plumlee's suspicions—and those of other pilots involved in the Reagan administration's war in Central America—helped to spark one of the darkest and least-known chapters of the Iran-Contra scandal. Dozens of pilots, including Plumlee, would eventually testify in top-secret hearings on Capitol Hill that they flew massive amounts of cocaine into the U.S., and that those flights often arrived at U.S. military bases.

"At the time, there was open war between the CIA and the DEA," he says. "They weren't sharing any information." Pilots who broke the code of silence were set up as drug smugglers whose claims that they worked for the CIA would be treated as lies—stupid lies. "A lot of guys were picking up documents to protect their asses," Plumlee says. "People were being indicted."

In 1983, Plumlee contacted staffers for U.S. Senator Gary Hart (D-Colorado) and told them everything he knew about the phony drug-interdiction program and how it had been used by the CIA as cover for the agency's secret—and illegal—shipment of arms for the Nicaraguan Contras. "I didn't do that for publicity, but to protect myself," he says. "This was before the fact—before the Iran-Contra hearings."

Once the scandal broke, Hart passed Plumlee to John Kerry, the Massachusetts senator investigating accusations that the CIA was involved in drug smuggling. Kerry took Plumlee's testimony under oath—and then sealed it. Plumlee's testimony will remain classified until 2020, although his name is still listed on the Kerry commission's official list of witnesses, available on microfiche at public libraries.

A copy of a Feb. 14, 1991, letter from Hart to Kerry confirms Plumlee's story. "In March of 1983, Plumlee contacted my Denver Senate Office and met with . . . my Senate staff," Hart wrote. "During the initial meeting, Plumlee raised certain allegations concerning U.S. foreign and military policy toward Nicaragua and the use of covert activities by U.S. intelligence agencies. . . . He stated that he had grave concerns that certain intelligence information about illegal arms and narcotic shipments were not being appropriately acted upon by U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies."

That meeting was three years before the U.S. public knew anything about Iran-Contra.

"Mr. Plumlee stated that he had personally flown U.S.-sponsored covert missions into Nicaragua," Hart told Kerry. "In [later] meetings, Mr. Plumlee raised several issues, including that covert U.S. intelligence agencies were directly involved in the smuggling and distribution of drugs to raise funds for covert military operations against the government of Nicaragua. He provided my staff with detailed maps and names of alleged covert landing strips in Mexico, Costa Rica, Louisiana, Arizona, Florida, and California where he alleged aircraft cargoes of drugs were off-loaded and replaced with Contra military supplies."

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El Toro Marine Corps Air Station is closed now, its runways headed for the shredder, its acres of residential homes and amenities slated for civilian conversion or the bulldozer. The question of whether drugs and weapons were secretly flown through El Toro is central to a mysterious death at the base more than 15 years ago. On Jan. 20, 1991, Colonel James E. Sabow, assistant chief of staff at the base, was relieved of command while investigators weighed evidence that he had diverted military aircraft for personal use. Investigations by the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the U.S. Department of Defense concluded that, two days later, a despondent Sabow walked into his back yard, put a shotgun barrel in his mouth and blew his head off.

But South Dakota neurologist Dr. David Sabow, the colonel's brother, didn't buy the suicide theory. He says the Orange County coroner's original investigation provides the best evidence of foul play. Specifically, the autopsy report stated that a large amount of aspirated blood was discovered in Sabow's lungs, suggesting that he had somehow taken several deep breaths after he shot himself in the head. According to Dr. Sabow and several neurologists who reviewed the evidence on his behalf, breathing would have been impossible for a man whose brain stem—including the medulla, which regulates breathing and other bodily functions—had been vaporized by the shotgun blast.

Dr. Sabow is certain that a rogue element at the base whacked his brother over the head with a blunt weapon, rendering him unconscious, then placed the gun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. He believes his brother was about to blow the whistle on illegal drug flights at the base. He points to a Defense Department Inspector General report that included statements by a military policeman (MP) at El Toro who claimed to have witnessed unmarked C-130 cargo aircraft landing and taking off in the middle of the night just months before Sabow died. "Through binoculars, the crew appeared to have shoulder-length hair," the report quoted one MP as saying. "He assumed they were civilians."

In 1993, two years after Colonel Sabow's death, Dr. Sabow appeared on Connie Chung's *Eye to Eye*. "I think my brother was murdered," Sabow told CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg. "Cold-blooded, calculated, premeditated murder . . . There's no question in my mind that this was ordered by the military, [and] it was carried out by the military."

Also appearing on the program were Gene Wheaton, a retired U.S. Army intelligence officer who also believed Sabow was murdered—and who offered to help Dr. Sabow prove it in court—and Tosh Plumlee. "I flew into three separate military bases that I can recall," Plumlee told Goldberg.

"You're flying cocaine?"

"We're flying cocaine. . . . These are all military bases."

"Does it sound plausible to you that if a high-ranking Marine knew something about covert operations and somebody was afraid he might go public with it—is it plausible that somebody might try to kill him?"

"Well, to me, yes," Plumlee answered. "It would be extremely—I mean, it would really be plausible."

In January 2000, with Wheaton's help, Dr. Sabow sued the Marine Corps at the Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse in Santa Ana. His lawyer was Daniel Sheehan, a crusading attorney who, in the 1980s, had unsuccessfully sued the CIA for its ties to drug traffickers. I covered the trial and watched as a federal judge tossed the case out of court (see "[Who Killed Col. James Sabow?](#)" Feb. 7, 2000).

Sheehan needed only to prove the very narrow claim that Marine Corps officials had threatened Dr. Sabow—intentionally inflicting severe emotional stress. But he was after bigger game, a chance to redeem himself, and used the Sabow trial to go public again with his assertion that the CIA was running drugs to raise cash for the Contras.

Plumlee waited at a Santa Ana hotel, thinking he would be called to the stand. That never happened. He says he later grew to regret having anything to do with the case, and thinks that Wheaton and Sheehan derailed it. "I haven't talked to Wheaton in years," he said. But given that Colonel Sabow was stationed at El Toro from 1984 to 1986 (he returned to the base in 1989 after a stint in Arizona), Plumlee remains suspicious about the colonel's death.

As a high-ranking Marine officer in charge of an entire air wing, Plumlee says, Sabow would have known about takeoffs and landings at El Toro and other air bases. "I dropped drugs into areas around Borrego Springs [in San Diego County], Lake Havasu, and outside Eagle Pass, Texas," Plumlee says. "I never saw drugs being unloaded in El Toro," he adds. "The only thing I saw being offloaded from our aircraft were crates with weapons, but there could have been kilos in there too. There was talk about drugs going into El Toro. A lot of pilots talked about it. But I know for a fact that Colonel Sabow was in command at El Toro when this happened. There is no way he could not have known about it. He would have to sign off on refueling of these C-130s. He would have to have been briefed, because he was a wing commander at El Toro. . . . I think he was murdered."

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Whatever Plumlee has told the government about secret CIA flights involving weapons and drugs that involved military bases, including El Toro, during the 1980s, remains a secret, his testimony classified. So far, no document has emerged showing that his under-cover-of-darkness landings in Orange County ever took place.

But I may have nearly had that document one chilly winter morning 10 years ago.

That day, I found myself shivering in California's high desert, standing beneath the wing of a hulking B-52 bomber at March Air Force Base's Historical Aircraft Museum near Riverside. The sky was clear, and the glare of the sun off the silver fuselage above us was blinding. At my side was Gene Wheaton, a retired U.S. Army intelligence officer with leathery skin, silver hair and a scraggly beard. We were waiting to meet a mysterious source who claimed to have top-secret government documents proving that drugs and weapons were flown in and out of U.S. military bases during the 1980s.

He was late. Wheaton grumbled impatiently. Suddenly, an overweight, middle-aged Latino in a faded U.S. Army parka and dark aviator sunglasses marched toward us. He was breathing heavily. In his right hand, he clutched a black walkie-talkie. He was not happy.

"Which one of you is the reporter?" he barked.

I lifted my hand, waving slightly.

"You didn't mention anything about bringing a partner."

"This is Gene Wheaton," I answered. "He used to work in Army intelligence. I brought him here to make sure your documents are the real thing."

"Hi there," said Wheaton.

The man didn't answer. Instead, he glanced around, peering beneath the belly of the B-52, and raised the walkie-talkie to his mouth.

"Perimeter. Status?"

"Perimeter. Check," a voice squawked. "All clear."

Satisfied, the man told us he also used to work in Army intelligence. He hinted at a top-secret background in black-box operations, including, he said, covert drug flights sponsored by Uncle Sam. With his free hand, the man pulled a folder from his pocket and handed it to me. Inside was a piece of paper stamped with the logo of the U.S. Department of Defense. It looked like an uncensored version of what had been faxed to my office a week or so earlier: instructions from the Pentagon to El Toro Marine Corps Air Station and March Air Force Base not to record landings or takeoffs by two civilian airlines.

This time, the names of the airlines weren't blacked out: Southern Air Transport and Evergreen International Airlines. The man with the walkie-talkie didn't demand anything—except that I take the paper from his hands. But the document wasn't stamped "declassified." It could be stolen, Wheaton warned, and if I accepted it, I could go to federal prison for violating national security laws.

Spooked, I followed Wheaton's advice and refused the gift. The thought dawned on me that I had just narrowly avoided being set up. The guy's bizarre appearance and behavior suggested he might have been a fraud—even though his paperwork looked like the real thing. I would later hear from reliable sources that Wheaton was wrong, and that I could have taken the document without fear of being arrested. I gave the man my business card and told him if he was determined to give me the document, to stick it in the mail and call me at work to let me know it was coming.

The strange man stomped off with his walkie-talkie. He passed through the shadow of the B-52 and disappeared into the bright sunlight. I'm still waiting for his call.

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