

NORMAN IJAMES

9/30/78

NOT TAPED

THIS STATEMENT HAS TO DO WITH THE PURCHASE OF JET AIRCRAFT BY THE TEMPLE.

As the church expanded we had been considering a mode of transport which would be faster and more convenient than our bus fleet. Because I am a commercial pilot and am licensed to and do fly four engine jets, I was selected to head up a committee to locate an airplane that would satisfy our needs and our budget. We, after much looking, settled on the DC 8 - 33 as the make and model of aircraft that would best serve our purposes. We had been actively shopping for about a year and a half without finding a suitable aircraft when an agent who was working with us, Mr. John Roden "Aviation Advisory Service" of Oakland, Ca. advised us of the availability of two such aircraft which were, he said, located in Europe. Their asking prices were in line with the sums we had budgeted.

During (date) I arranged to go and inspect both craft with L.C. Davis, another church member, who is an aviation mechanic. The first craft we inspected was available through KLM and was located in Switzerland, Basel. We went there, inspected the aircraft, ~~xxxx~~ made a judgement that it was suitable for our purposes and proceeded to Paris where the other craft, offered by UTA, was said to be. Upon arrival in Paris we discovered that the aircraft was in fact at Kinshasha, in Zaire, Africa. The company agreed to pay the cost of going there to see the craft so we went. The aircraft was there when we arrived and we gave it a thorough inspection, determining that it was also suitable for our purposes. While we were at Kinshasha a large section of the airport was roped off and patrolled by security personnel. Light U.S. Airforce passenger planes were constantly coming in and out, and there was a lot of ground activity. It was common knowledge there that the CIA was basing their Angola operations out of Kinshasha. I ~~was~~ am quite sure that they were interested in two black Americans coming there, taking a plane down, and inspecting it for several days.

Several days later we returned to San Francisco, and after much consultation with the Church Board made an offer through the Agent on the KLM offered craft. Shortly thereafter we received the reply that the plane was no longer for sale. In fact it had not been sold and sometime later was again put back on the market. We then made an offer on the second craft, the one we had seen at Kinshasha, and again received the reply that that craft, as well, was not available for sale.

In the process of equipping the church organization to operate a four engine jet aircraft several of the members took flight training, and I had to take a transition course for the DC 8. I took the course at the United Airlines training facility at Denver, Colorado. While I was there I had an instructor who tried in every way to make the course difficult. I am also a licensed flight instructor, and have spent several years teaching and can well know when instruction is not done as it should be. As a result I was having a supposed difficulty with the course. I went to management and insisted upon a change of instructors and had completed the balance of the course satisfactorily in a week. I am convinced that the first instructor was doing his best to prevent me from getting qualified for the DC 8 aircraft.

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