

News Digest

By The Associated Press

Captured American: I flew several contra supply flights

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — An American captured after a Contra weapons supply plane was shot down over Nicaragua said Thursday he worked with CIA employees and took part in 10 such flights from Honduras and El Salvador.

Eugene Hasenfus, 45, of Marinette, Wis., said in a nationally broadcast news conference that four of the flights were made from Aguacate air base in Honduras and six from Ilopango air base in El Salvador.

"We would be flying into Honduras... and we would be loading up on small arms and ammunition and this would be flown to Nicaragua," he said. "These we would drop to the Contras."

Hasenfus said 24 to 26 "company people" assisted the program in El Salvador, including flight crews, maintenance crews and "two Cuban nationalized Americans that worked for the CIA."

Hasenfus said he was offered the job in June by William J. Cooper, identified as the pilot of the aircraft. Cooper was one of three people killed when the aircraft was shot down Sunday by a surface-to-air missile and crashed in southern Nicaragua.

Nicaraguan officials have claimed the supply operation was part of a CIA effort to help the Contras, who have been fighting for 4 1/2 years to over-

throw the leftist Sandinista government. Under restrictions imposed by Congress, the CIA may not aid the Contras.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said the agency could only respond to Hasenfus' remarks by repeating its earlier denials of involvement.

Hasenfus said he was told he would be paid \$3,000 per month plus housing, transportation and expenses for working with the air crews.

He said he was employed by Corporate Air Services, which has the same Miami address as Southern Air Transport, formerly owned by the CIA.

Explosion on distant stars could solve physics mystery

LOS ANGELES — A Navy astronomer predicts the latest in a series of gargantuan explosions on a distant double star will be detected Saturday, and scientists around the world are watching to see if he's right.

They also will try to determine whether the blast produces mysterious particles called cygnets, an unexplained form of matter. Some physicists believe they found evidence of cygnets after previous explosions on star system Cygnus X-3. Other say cygnets can't exist.

"Either we're right and great heroes for finding new and previously unknown things or we're just stupid," said Marvin Marshak, University of Minnesota physics department chairman and among those who believe cygnets exist.

At least a month will be needed to determine whether cygnets are produced in an explosion on Cygnus X-3, a pair

of stars that orbit each other at the edge of the Milky Way, at least 217,560 trillion miles from Earth, said University of Pennsylvania physicist Michael Cherry.

Scientists believe Cygnus X-3 is a major source of the once-mysterious cosmic rays that bombard Earth and the newest of the galaxy. It is the first known source for them.

Cherry said astronomers will consider the prediction by Ken Johnston, an astronomer at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, accurate if the blast occurs anytime this month.

"We're talking about explosions beyond our ability to even contemplate, explosions that would make a thermonuclear bomb look like dropping a pebble in a lake," Marshak said during a telephone interview.

No one will be harmed by radiation from the blast, Johnston said.

In Brief

Nebraskans may get camera refunds

LINCOLN — Nebraskans who purchased some models of Minolta cameras will be able to claim refunds of up to \$15 under a settlement that has been submitted to the U.S. District Court for Maryland.

Nebraska joined in an antitrust action against the Minolta Corp., according to a newsrelease from Attorney General Robert Spire.

The actions allege that Minolta improperly attempted to set and maintain retail prices charged by its distributors for two popular models of cameras — the Minolta Maxxum 7000 and the Af-Tele.

The agreement provides that Nebraskans who purchased Maxxum 7000 cameras prior to March 21, can claim a \$15 per camera refund and Nebraskans who purchased an Af-Tele camera prior to March 21 can claim an \$8 refund.

Amtrak derailment

FALL RIVER, Wis. — An Amtrak passenger train headed from Seattle to Chicago derailed in southern Wisconsin on Thursday, killing one crew member and injuring nine other people, a railroad spokesman said.

About 227 people were aboard the Empire Builder, said Amtrak spokesman John Jacobsen in Washington.

He said the train's two locomotives and three cars fell on their sides. Five other cars derailed but remained upright, he said. Jacobsen said the train had 15 cars.

He said the dead man was a fireman in one of the locomotives. Jacobsen said it wasn't known whether the injured were passengers or members of the crew.

Zaccaro pleads innocent

NEW YORK — John Zaccaro, the husband of former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro, pleaded innocent Thursday to charges of bribe solicitation and attempted extortion in connection with the granting of cable television franchises.

Ferraro, a former Democratic congresswoman who was Walter Mondale's running mate in 1984, sat in the front row of the courtroom as her husband's lawyer entered the innocent plea.

The arraignment took place a few hours after Zaccaro surrendered at the borough of Queens' central booking office in the basement of the courthouse on charges handed up by a grand jury.

The indictment charges Zaccaro with one count of bribe solicitation and two counts of attempted extortion.

Senate convicts, removes Judge Claiborne from office

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday convicted U.S. District Judge Harry E. Claiborne of "high crimes and misdemeanors," making him the fifth federal official in history removed from office through impeachment.

Claiborne, a convicted tax evader and federal prisoner, was thrown off the bench at 4:14 p.m. EDT, following adjournment of the first Senate impeachment trial in 50 years.

The chief U.S. district judge for Nevada was found "guilty" on three of four impeachment articles by the necessary two-thirds majority. He was acquitted on a fourth article, although a majority of senators voted "guilty."

Claiborne, 69, was found guilty on Articles I and II, accusing him of the same willful tax violations that caused a federal court jury to find him guilty in 1984.

Article III, of which he was acquitted, said the judge's criminal conviction alone warranted his removal. Article IV contended his conduct betrayed the judiciary and the nation.

The votes were: Article I, 87-10; Article II, 90-7; Article III, 46-17; and Article IV, 89-8. Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, voted "present" on all four counts. However, on count III, 34 senators joined him in

"present" votes.

A conviction on any article would have been sufficient to oust Claiborne from his lifetime job.

Most senators were somber as they responded to President Pro Tempore Strom Thurmond's questions, "How say you: Is the respondent Harry E. Claiborne guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty, Mr. President," responded Sen. William Armstrong, R-Colo., the first to respond on impeachment Article I.

There was absolute silence in the blue-carpeted chamber, making unnecessary Thurmond's warning to spectators in the gallery that "There will be no expressions of approval or disapproval."

Just before the result of Article I was announced, Claiborne sat back in his chair and folded his arms across his chest. Later, he placed his glasses on the defense table. But he kept his composure, from his entrance in the chamber to his exit between Sergeant-at-Arms Ernest Garcia and a federal marshal.

Former Sen. Howard Cannon, D-Nev., a member of the judge's defense team, said after the vote, "I feel the Senate did not give Judge Claiborne the trial he was entitled to. It did not hear one solitary witness before the full Senate."

Cannon said the Senate's judgment was based largely on "hearsay" and unfavorable newspaper articles, but "it was not really based on the facts."

A Senate aide, speaking only on condition he not be identified by name, said the Senate leadership did not introduce a resolution to bar Claiborne from holding federal office in the future because, "They're feeling was 'enough is enough.'" Such a resolution, introduced in some past impeachment trials, would have required only a simple majority.

Three district judges and an appellate judge have been the only officials in the nation's past to face the ignominy of a Senate conviction. Of all 13 officials who faced impeachment proceedings, only Claiborne entered the Senate chamber as a convicted felon.

Claiborne contended that federal agents and prosecutors he criticized as "a bunch of crooks" were responsible for his court conviction.

He acknowledged that more than \$106,000 in income was not reported on his 1979 and 1980 tax returns, but blamed the errors on firms he hired to prepare them.

Scientist grow Hepatitis B virus in test tubes

BOSTON — Scientists' long quest to grow the hepatitis B virus in a test tube has been achieved by at least six research teams, and researchers say the discovery should speed the search for new drugs to fight the disease.

Although the virus easily infects people, scientists had failed for at least a decade to make it thrive in human

tissue in test tubes, a key step in learning how the virus functions and testing medicines that might kill it.

Over the past year, new information about the germ's reproduction has provided important clues to the puzzle.

The first team to publish its solution, headed by Dr. Max Essex of the Harvard School of Public Health, reports

on its work in Friday's issue of the journal Cell.

At an August meeting in Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y., that was closed to reporters, Essex's groups and five others discussed a variety of similar techniques to grow the virus.

In an interview, Essex attributed his success to the availability of human cancer cells that would support the

virus and new techniques for transferring genes, along with "hard work and luck."

The hepatitis B virus infects 200,000 Americans annually. It can cause cirrhosis and other liver diseases, including liver cancer. Worldwide, hepatocellular carcinoma caused by the virus strikes an estimated 250,000 people each year and kills virtually all of them.

Government survey: Regular cocaine use soaring

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans who use cocaine has soared while abuse of most other drugs leveled off in the 1980s, federal health officials reported Thursday.

A government survey conducted in 1985 found that 5.8 million Americans had used cocaine in the previous month, a 38 percent jump from the 4.2 million people reported in a similar 1982 survey.

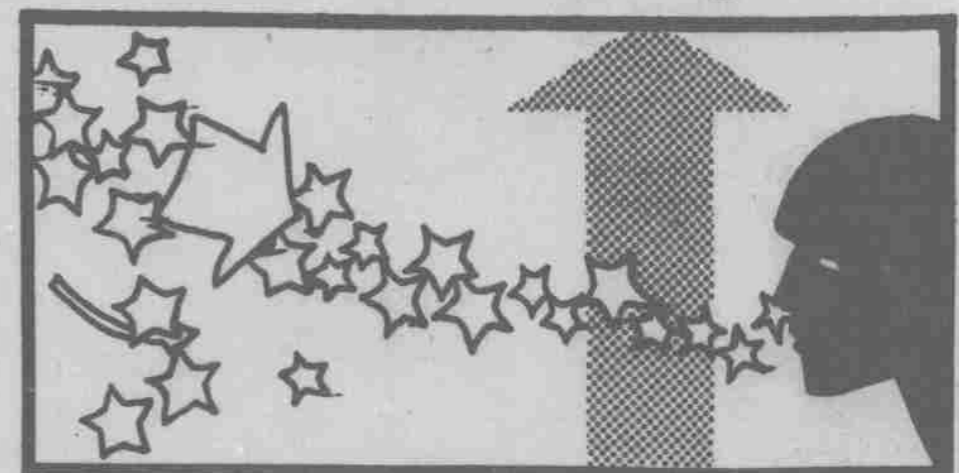
But the eighth National Household Survey on Drug Abuse found little change in the number who used cocaine at least once in the past year. Their ranks grew only from 11.9 million in 1982 to 12.2 million.

Cocaine users are resorting to the drug more frequently, possibly as they exhaust what Dr. Donald Ian Macdonald, head of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, called a "grace period" for many young people before cocaine plays havoc with their lives.

Macdonald said the widening use of crack, a potent, smokable form of cocaine, is also cutting short any "grace period."

The survey found 44 percent of youthful cocaine users have smoked the drug freebase. Thirty-eight percent of all those who used cocaine in the month before the survey smoked it.

Macdonald expressed alarm that 30 percent of women in the child-bearing ages of 18 to 34 used an illicit drug at least once in the past year and 18 percent had done so in the past month. Drugs can severely harm unborn



babies.

The survey found that 113 million Americans drink alcohol. More than half of youth — 15 million have tried alcohol at some time. Over 60 million people smoke cigarettes, and more than 11 million youths have tried smoking.

Health and Human Services Secretary Otis R. Bowen told a news conference the findings "confirm once again that high historic levels of illicit drug use persist in the United States."

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