

No survivors discovered after Indiana plane crash

ROSELAWN, Ind. — An American Eagle commuter plane crashed Monday in a cornfield in northwest Indiana during a driving rainstorm, killing all 68 people aboard.

Flight 4184 from Indianapolis to Chicago went down 30 miles south of Gary at about 4 p.m., the Federal Aviation Administration said.

The heavy rain forced authorities to quickly call off the search of the area until today.

American Eagle would not speculate on the possible cause of the crash, airline spokeswoman Debbie Weathers said. State police said there were no survivors, according to the FAA.

"Debris was so scattered, you really couldn't tell if there was an airplane out there," said Michael Schwanke, a reporter with WLQI radio in Rensselaer who was at the site.

"People around the area were telling me that there was just nothing left," he said.

The plane, an ATR-72 — a high-wing, twin-engine propjet — was descending from an altitude of 10,000

feet to 8,000 feet when it disappeared from radar screens at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, said Don Zochert with the FAA.

The plane had been circling in a holding pattern before it began its descent, said Tim Smith, a spokesman for American Eagle.

People on the scene said there was driving rain at the time of the crash and that it was too dark to see much in the area. Winds were gusting up to 49 mph in Gary, Ind., the closest reporting station, the National Weather Service said.

Bob Stone, a hunter, said he heard the plane's engines just before the crash.

"I could hear a motor winding out and it sounded like thunder and then there was a crash and I didn't hear anything else," Stone said.

Kathy Philpot, a spokeswoman for the Lake County coroner's office, said workers were told to call off the search for bodies and return to the scene Tuesday.

Jasper County Sheriff Steve



Reames said the Newton County sheriff's department had set up a command post near the crash site.

"We've had torrential rains all day, and right now there's such a downpour. They're almost unable to go out; we're talking open farm country," Reames said.

Spence scolds GOP for lack of support

OMAHA — Feeling abandoned by his own party and betrayed by the news media, Republican Gene Spence said Monday that he would fight on in the face of overwhelmingly negative odds.

Spence had surprised his running mate and other GOP officials by saying over the weekend that his chances of defeating Democratic Gov. Ben Nelson were 100-to-1.

At a news conference at his campaign headquarters, Spence criticized Republicans who, in his

Star and Omaha television station KMTV showed Nelson with a 48 percentage point lead.

Spence was angry that his own bleak assessment of his poll standings were interpreted as a near-concession to Nelson.

"I resent it deeply. I don't quit. I'm not a quitter," said the Republican nominee, biting off his words, punctuating them with jabs of his finger into the podium.

"You play the game out. I can't tell what's going to happen in the next nine days," he said.

Spence said that what he thought was an honest judgment about his dismal showing in recent polls was misinterpreted in news media reports that said he was all but quitting.

After learning the results of the Lincoln Journal-Star/KMTV poll, Spence told the Lincoln newspaper that he had underestimated Nelson's popularity.

"My chances of winning now are about 100 to one," he said in Saturday's editions. "I was a poor candidate. It's not the party's fault. I think it's me."

Spence said the quote was accurate but he objected to interpretations that it amounted to a concession of the race to Nelson.

"I never quit," Spence said Monday.

He told the Sunday Omaha-World Herald that he knew he would be a good governor, "but I haven't been able to project that to the people or the people don't care."

Spence was impatient with Republicans who said they were disappointed in what he said.

"It irritates me that all of the people that grouse and whine — and didn't work for me — never called me" before complaining.

Spence said all he said was that based on the poll information, it appeared that he had little chance to catch Nelson.

He insisted Monday that he was still going to go for that chance.

"I've been in this situation before," Spence said. "I'm used to rejection, but I never give up."

"The pro-life movement has been adamant that someone like Gene Spence should not be governor."

GENE SPENCE

Republican candidate

view, are sitting on the campaign sidelines because they do not think he is tough enough on abortion.

"The pro-life movement has been adamant that someone like Gene Spence should not be governor," Spence said.

Spence said he opposes abortion but does not think it should be a political issue.

"Quite frankly, we missed this issue as being an issue that could dominate so much," Spence said.

Spence said he was angry that he was being judged in the GOP based on abortion alone.

"I'm all the Republican Party has, and they better get used to it, and quit whining. I'm tired of the whining in the Republican Party," he said.

Spence said the state GOP needs what he described as a wake-up call, or it would be embarrassed at the polls.

An Omaha World-Herald poll published Sunday showed the Democratic ticket with a 44 percentage point lead. A separate poll conducted for the Lincoln Journal-

White House security shaken by man charged with shooting

WASHINGTON — The man accused of firing a semiautomatic rifle at the White House was charged with four felonies and ordered to undergo a psychiatric exam Monday. Prosecutors said a letter taken from his truck "raises questions whether he is competent."

U.S. Magistrate Deborah Robinson refused to release the handwritten letter, which was taken from Francisco Martin Duran's pickup. She ordered him returned to court Wednesday, after the exam, for a competency hearing.

U.S. Attorney Eric H. Holder Jr. said authorities have a second letter Duran was carrying when he was seized outside the White House.

Also found in the truck, according to prosecutors, was a shotgun, an arsenal of ammunition, a gun magazine, a machete, sleeping bags and a stuffed animal.

Officials have previously indicated the letter in the truck was an explanation of how Duran's possessions were to be distributed to his wife and son in event of his death.

In his first court appearance, Duran, 26, stood and stated his name, raised his right hand and swore to tell the truth.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Finnegan told the magistrate that Duran's letter "brings into question whether the defendant is competent to proceed."

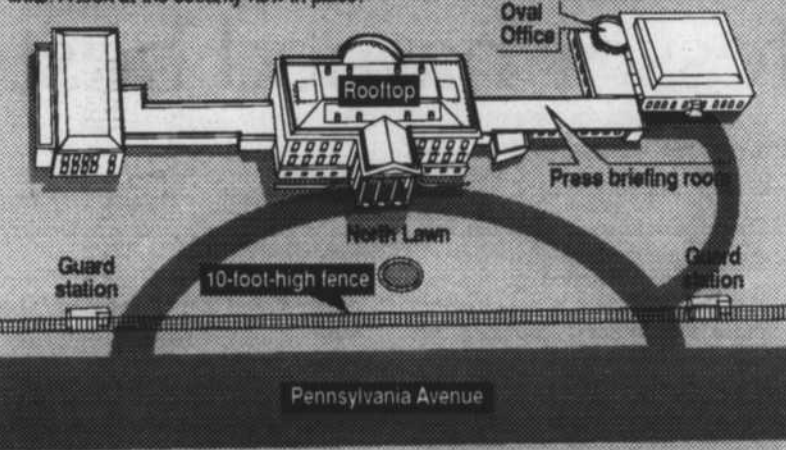
Holder said later the request for the 24-hour psychiatric evaluation was "not an indication that we believe he is incompetent." Nor was it, he said, an indication that prosecutors thought Duran "was at the time of the offense insane."

Competency at this stage means the defendant can understand the charges against him and can assist his attorney, public defender Leigh Kenny.

Kenny said she had no concerns

White House security

White House security has been under review since Sept. 12, when a small plane crashed on the grounds. Saturday's shooting again pointed out the system's weak links. A look at the security now in place:



Getting in

Visitors and staff must pass through metal detectors. Staff members, press, etc., have special entrances. Visitors must pass security checks. Dogs check every vehicle that enters the grounds, sniffing for bombs.

The grounds

A 10-foot-high metal fence separates the grounds from the sidewalk. But people often press up against the fence to see the White House. Motion sensors and cameras detect intruders, and guards patrol the grounds.

Surrounding area

Sharpshooters are stationed on the rooftop. Airspace around downtown Washington, D.C., is restricted. Streets are blocked to traffic when the president's motorcade passes. The president's path in and out of the White House is frequently varied.

What's next

The Secret Service would like to expand security perimeters, perhaps blocking off Pennsylvania Avenue to traffic. Clinton resists this option, fearing the White House will be cut off from the American public.

AP / Karl Gude

about Duran's competence at this time.

If Duran is found competent after Wednesday's hearing, there will be a preliminary hearing in which prosecutors would have to present enough evidence to justify continuing the case.

He was charged with possession of a firearm as a convicted felon, destruction of federal property, assault on a federal officer and use of a firearm during the commission of a

crime of violence. Prosecutors said he could receive as much as 35 years in prison if convicted of all four counts.

Holder said other charges might be filed later.

Prosecutors would not discuss a possible motive for Saturday's shooting, in which a man fired 20 to 30 shots at the White House through the iron fence on Pennsylvania Avenue with a Chinese-made semiautomatic rifle. Eight shots hit the building.

Psychics having visions about missing children

UNION, S.C. — Frustrated investigators looking into the disappearance of two little boys in an alleged carjacking were considering offering a reward Monday after receiving a growing number of calls from "psychics."

Also Monday, the television program "A Current Affair" reported that a friend of Susan Smith, the boys' mother, failed a lie detector test question about whether he was withholding information in the case.

The 24-year-old friend, Mitch Sinclair, declined to answer questions about the report Monday night.

Mrs. Smith told authorities she was en route to visit Sinclair, a family friend, when the children were taken in a carjacking last week. Union County Sheriff Howard Wells said Sinclair was not a suspect.

Three-year-old Michael Smith and his 14-month-old brother, Alex, have not been seen since Oct. 25, when Mrs. Smith reported that a man jumped in her car, then ordered her out at gunpoint, taking the boys still

strapped in safety seats.

With no firm leads and no motive six days into the nationwide manhunt for the alleged abductor, Wells said a growing number of calls on the case were "of a psychic nature."

"They're the result of someone having a vision, or having a dream or someone saying, 'I just have a strong belief that if you look here this is what you're going to find,'" he said.

He added: "If ... money is going to motivate some types of individuals to give us solid information, we may go into a reward" later this week.

He said a company in the area had donated \$10,000 to a reward fund.

In this frightened town, parents watched closely over children going out to trick-or-treat.

Jana Rutledge joined other mothers in accompanying their children on foot.

"Last year, I just rode along the street beside them. Not this time," she said.

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