

NEWS DIGEST

By The
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Edited by Michelle Gamer

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Cost a factor in lack of 'black box'

WASHINGTON — Air Force One and other military VIP aircraft carry "black box" flight data recorders. But for cost reasons, the Air Force decided against installing the equipment on the plane that carried Commerce Secretary Ron Brown to his death.

The data recorders would not have kept the airplane in the sky, but they might have provided a clue as to why Brown's plane strayed almost two miles off course before crashing into a Croatian hillside near Dubrovnik.

The omission will hamper an investigation that got under way in stormy weather Thursday, a day after the crash.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires all but the smallest commercial passenger planes to carry flight recorder equipment. But the FAA has no jurisdiction over the military.

In 1974 — a year after the plane that went down in Croatia was purchased — the Air Force established a policy that all new aircraft be equipped with black boxes except in a few special circumstances. An Air Force official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity, said putting the equipment on the existing fleet would have been prohibitively expensive.

"We'd probably like to go back and revisit a decision of that kind," the official said. "Somebody decided that with the money that's available for a variety of things on the plane," it was better to

invest in systems that help keep a plane flying as opposed to one that was helpful to investigators after a crash.

Military investigators who arrived in Dubrovnik Thursday have some evidence to go on. Officials have impounded a voice recording taken in the airport tower of conversations between ground controllers and the crew of the T43 carrying Brown.

Because the plane, a military version of a Boeing 737, was purchased in 1973 for training navigators rather than carrying passengers, it was not equipped with the flight recorders, according to Air Force Gen. Howell Estes III, director of operations for the Joints Chiefs of Staff.

But as of 1988, the Air Force converted the plane for VIP travel and other passenger uses from its home in Ramstein Air Base, Germany, without backfitting the aircraft with the black boxes. This ran counter to a general Air Force policy that VIP and other passenger-style planes be equipped with the voice and data recorders.

"We have not been able to ascertain why this particular aircraft was not equipped with them," said Maj. Robin Chandler, an Air Force spokeswoman.

A senior defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said combat aircraft are generally not equipped with the recorders for fear that if the planes crashed in enemy territory, the tapes would provide a neat summary of the aircraft's capability.

Clinton signs farm bill creating new payments

WASHINGTON — President Clinton quietly and reluctantly signed historic farm legislation Thursday that snaps the decades-old link between crop prices and government subsidies.

Although the law rightfully lifts many government controls on farmers, it "fails to provide an adequate safety net for family farmers," the president said from a White House mourning the death of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

Clinton opposed the key farm provisions but said growers need to know what the government has in mind for them as they head to the fields this spring. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman pledged the department would do everything in its power to carry out the law.

The law ends government-guaranteed prices for corn, other feed grains, cotton, rice and wheat — a staple of U.S. farm policy since the Depression.

Instead, farmers will get guaranteed payments that decline over seven years and an immediate end to most planting controls. The payments total \$36 billion over seven years and account for most of the spending in the \$47 billion law.

"This farm bill is the most historic change in American agriculture since the 1930s," said Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "Production and supply controls will end, and farmers will produce for the market for the first time since the Great Depression."

The administration opposed the bill because it gives farmers a windfall of high payments when skyrocketing market prices mean traditional subsidies would have fallen sharply. Afterward, the guaranteed payments dwindle, giving growers little protection if prices collapse.

Clinton said he would propose legislation next year to restore the safety net. Congress will definitely get a shot

"This farm bill is the most historic change in American agriculture since the 1930s."

RICHARD LUGAR

Indiana senator

at crafting new farm legislation when the law expires in seven years.

Supporters of the new law say the guaranteed payments would put financial planning and risk management into the hands of farmers while guaranteeing farm programs against almost certain cuts in the future.

"With one signature on the market transition contract, farmers will be free from seven years of paperwork and long lines at the county USDA office," said Rep. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., chairman of the House Agriculture Committee and chief author of the plan.

Glickman said the department will work on creating tools for farmers to find alternatives, such as revenue insurance, to traditional subsidies. He also said he would urge farmers and bankers to work on ways for farmers to save their payments for a rainy day.

Although the administration opposed the core provision, the bill held enough sweeteners to avoid a veto, including money for conservation and environmental protection and for rural development and research, and a guarantee that food stamps and other nutrition programs will continue while Congress works to overhaul the welfare system.

The administration also supported crop provisions giving growers more flexibility to plant what they want.

"The expansion of planting flexibility will improve U.S. competitiveness in world markets," Clinton said.

Kaczynski

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neighbors as going everywhere on foot or on an old bicycle, have mailed bombs from locations including San Francisco; Oakland, Calif.; Sacramento, Calif.; and Chicago? Other bombs were left in cities around the country.

Dick Lundberg, a neighbor, said he sometimes gave Kaczynski rides into Helena, where plane connections were available.

Asked about the possibility of accomplices, one federal agent said: "This guy is a loner. He wouldn't work with someone else."

FBI and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents found a partially completed pipe bomb in the loft at Kaczynski's cabin, according to an affidavit by FBI agent Donald J. Sachtleben.

Ten three-ring binders were recovered filled with "page after page of meticulous writings and sketches which I recognize to be diagrams of explosive devices," Sachtleben said. The diagrams show cross-sections of pipe bombs and electrical circuitry.

In addition, agents found galvanized metal, copper and plastic pipes, four of them with copper plates sealing one end, "one of the first steps in the construction of a pipe bomb," Sachtleben said.

Federal officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said searchers also found two manual typewriters. The Unabomber has sent a sheaf of typed letters over the past few years, and investigators wanted to compare those with the typewriters.

A former assistant professor of mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley, Kaczynski graduated from Harvard when he was barely 20, and received a master's degree and doctorate from the University of Michigan several years later. Academic-oriented and

"Teddy was unusually smart...He made it through high school in three years...I didn't see much emotion, just quiet."

EVELYN VANDERLAAN
neighbor of Kaczynski's family

obsessed with technology, he fits the FBI psychological profile of the suspect.

After retreating from academic life in the 1970s, Kaczynski lived in Utah, doing odd jobs and menial labor.

Evelyn Vanderlaan, who was a neighbor of Kaczynski's family in the working-class Chicago suburb of Evergreen Park, Ill., said: "Teddy was unusually smart. ... He made it through high school in three years. ... I didn't see much emotion, just quiet."

In court Thursday, Kaczynski appeared calm and spoke softly but clearly before U.S. District Judge Charles C. Lovell. He consulted frequently with his attorney, public defender Michael Donahoe.

When Lovell asked if he were unable to afford a lawyer, Kaczynski said, "Quite correct." He said "no" when the judge asked if he had any mental impairments.

Lovell told Kaczynski and his lawyer to decide by noon Friday whether they want a preliminary hearing and a hearing to determine bail.

A federal grand jury is scheduled to convene April 17 in Great Falls and will decide whether to hand down an indictment in the case, a federal law enforcement official said on the condition of anonymity.

Evidence

What federal agents found in the mountain cabin of Theodore John Kaczynski:

His notes

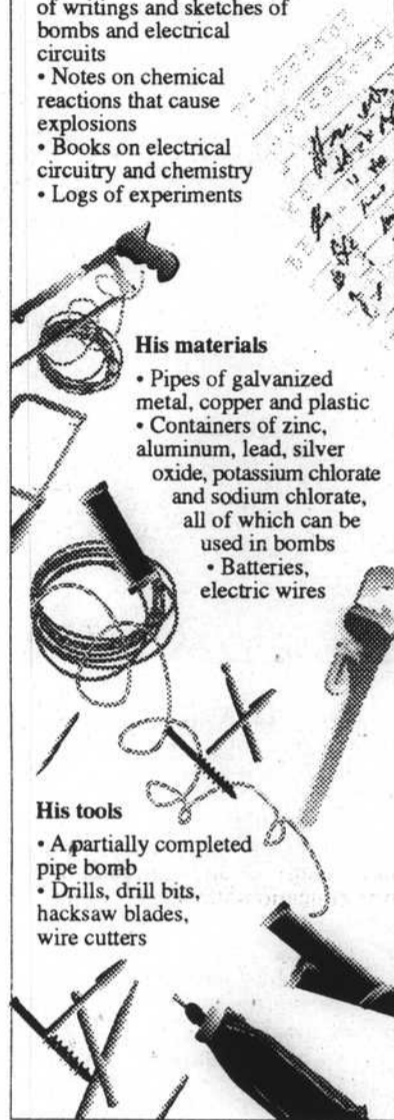
- 10 three-ring binders full of writings and sketches of bombs and electrical circuits
- Notes on chemical reactions that cause explosions
- Books on electrical circuitry and chemistry
- Logs of experiments

His materials

- Pipes of galvanized metal, copper and plastic
- Containers of zinc, aluminum, lead, silver oxide, potassium chlorate and sodium chlorate, all of which can be used in bombs
- Batteries, electric wires

His tools

- A partially completed pipe bomb
- Drills, drill bits, hacksaw blades, wire cutters



Freemen sit down with negotiators for first time during 11-day standoff

JORDAN, Mont. — Sitting on folding chairs on a dirt road, the besieged Freemen met with negotiators Thursday for the first time in the 11-day standoff.

Four Freemen met for about an hour and a half with four negotiators at the edge of the fugitives' compound. At least one of the negotiators meeting with the Freemen was a federal agent, but the identities of the other three could not be immediately confirmed. The identities of the Freemen representatives were also unknown.

One of the Freemen did most of the talking, occasionally standing, walking around and waving his arms. Reporters were kept about a mile away, but the negotiations could be seen clearly through binoculars and telephoto lenses.

Freemen in a pickup truck parked about 100 yards away watched the meeting closely. Federal agents did the same from another vantage point, and a surveillance plane circled overhead.

When the meeting ended, the Free-

men packed up the chairs and went back to the ranch house on the 960-acre farm. The negotiators drove past about a dozen TV crews and reporters without stopping to comment.

However tentative, it was the first sign of a break in the standoff that began with high tension March 25 when agents arrested two Freemen leaders. The tension has dulled into routine.

The Freemen are anti-government activists who refuse to recognize the government's authority. They have their own laws and courts based on their interpretation of the Bible, the U.S. Constitution and other documents.

FBI agents are trying to negotiate a peaceful surrender with the remaining fugitive Freemen, who are among 20 or so people holed up at the ranch about 30 miles northwest of Jordan.

The FBI continued its laid-back surveillance of the ranch. Some agents staffed checkpoints at crossroads around the Freemen's 960-acre farm, while others kept watch from hilltop vantage points.

When the Freemen look out from

their barricaded farm, they see much the same scene as they did before the standoff began — miles and miles of treeless plains, the wheat stubble poking through a few inches of snow.

About half the 22 men, women and children estimated to be at the Freemen compound are wanted on federal charges including mail fraud, bank fraud and conspiracy for threatening public officials. The Freemen have renounced all established authority, set up their own government called Justus Township, issued millions of dollars in bogus checks, and threatened to kill those who stand in their way.

They are thought to have stockpiled weapons at their compound, but so far their aggression has been only verbal, not physical.

The standoff began when undercover federal agents arrested Freemen leaders LeRoy Schweitzer and Daniel Petersen Jr. A third Freemen, Richard E. Clark, turned himself in to FBI agents Saturday.

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