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PORTUGAL FLIGHTS ARE TIED TO C.I.A.

Witness Says It Supported Sale of B-26 Bombers

By DOUGLAS ROBINSON
Special to The New York Times

BUFFALO, Oct. 6 — An aviation writer and former consultant to several Federal agencies gave testimony today suggesting that the flying of seven bombers to Portugal last year was a secret operation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

He thus contradicted the Government's contention that the flights were an illegal private venture by a British pilot and a French nobleman on trial here in Federal Court.

The writer was Martin Caidin, the author of at least 32 books and numerous articles on aviation, who said he was a former adviser to several Federal intelligence units.

"You just don't fly military aircraft out of the United States without some form of cooperation," he told a jury of 10 men and two women. "At least, you don't fly openly."

Mr. Caidin said he had been assured by the man responsible for carrying out the transaction, Gregory R. Board, the owner of a Tucson, Ariz., plane-leasing service now said to be living on the island of Jamaica, that the flights had been worked out in cooperation with the C.I.A.

Operation Sparrow

He also testified that he had openly discussed the C.I.A. involvement with several intelligence officers of the United States Air Force. He said the B-26 flights had been carried out under the code name of Operation Sparrow.

After the participants had been arrested and he had filed some 25,000 words with the Air Force in support of the pilot,

Mr. Caidin asserted, he was told by an Air Force colonel to "lay off the case" and to "stop putting on pressure."

He identified the officer as Col. Charles Callahan, the security chief at Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, and quoted him as saying that "another Government agency is involved in the case."

The defendants are John R. Hawke, a bearded former Royal Air Force pilot, now a resident of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Count Henri Marie Françoise de Marin de Montmarin, a patriotic-looking French airplane broker.

Both are charged with conspiracy and with violating the Federal Munitions Control Act, which forbids the exporting of military materiel without a license to all countries except Canada.

A third defendant, Woodrow W. Roderick, a Canadian accused of being the so-called middleman in the transaction, was dismissed late last week for lack of evidence.

The World War II bombers ostensibly were to have been used by Portugal to combat threatened uprisings in her African territories of Angola and Mozambique.

U. S. Denies Guilt

Late last night, under prodding by a Hungarian delegate to the United Nations, the United States denied that it had had any part in the deal in violation of an earlier pledge not to sell such aircraft to Portugal.

Mr. Caidin testified that Mr. Hawke had once flown directly over the White House in trying to land one of the bombers in Washington. Despite the fact that this is strictly forbidden, he went on, "no violation was ever filed against him [Mr. Hawke]."

He said he had found this "incredible . . . based on my experience as a pilot and as a writer on air safety."

The defense has contended that the flights to Portugal were not secret and that flight plans and customs clearances had been obtained for all seven of the bombers.

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