

you're biased on the equation, anything goes, for that matter. We have to remember one thing. I mean on this particular incident, I'm aware that it was a butchery of some sort. But nevertheless you have to look at one thing.

FISKE: What's that?

MAN: The Russians have proven that, look, "You're off your course, you know you're flying, we have given you all the warning, you're not taking that kind of the warning. Down you go, Buddy. We can't take no chances."

Pearl Harbor was one of the facts of some careless guys that cost us almost the war. So, in view of the tension situation that is existing between the two countries, if this thing would have been on the mellow side, possibly there would have been something about it.

There was another incident a lot of people don't [unintelligible] was the U-2 incident. I mean General Eisenhower, then President of the United States, was saying that there's no airplane flying over you. We are not spying. And those guys knocked it down and they...

ST. JOHN: You got our attention with the U-2 incident.

General?

GENERAL ROMER: That's one so old, you can touch it.

ST. JOHN: The U-2 incident, we now know from Oleg Penkovsky, who was essentially providing intelligence to the West until he was caught and shot. He was a high-ranking colonel -- the U-2 incident, according to Penkovsky and other sources -- and we have, what, 24 years now to -- this was a high-flying aircraft, if there are people in the audience who don't remember it. It was in May of 1960. It involved a high-altitude aircraft which took precise reconnaissance photos. It was shot down and Gary Powers was held.

That incident, according to Penkovsky was made the issue it was by Khrushchev because he wanted to destroy that summit. It was a deliberate -- by the way, there was an RB-47 aircraft with eight crewmen aboard over the Kola Peninsular in the Barents Sea that was shot down two months after that incident. And guess what? We also now know that Khrushchev ordered that shot down. For what reason? Because he wanted to make an international incident as a way of influencing the 1960 elections.

FISKE: Each of you, in your book, discusses the fact that the Soviets, in fact, overfly many strategic bases in...

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ST. JOHN: They do it with commercial airliners. I mean they've got that run that comes from Moscow -- what kind of aircraft are they, General, with those huge propellers that do non-stop from Moscow to Cuba? I can't remember it. And a lot of them are commercial flights. And what they do is they will be on a course that takes them over water, and then they will go over the Groton, Connecticut naval base. I can't say whether they take photographs, they've done it on several -- a Czech airliner in '81 did it.

But what was your point?

FISKE: The point is that we don't shoot them down. What do we do, we protest?

ST. JOHN: Well, that's the difference in the respective characters of the both societies. The way we deal with problems like this -- for example, there's a term in aviation, or military aviation, called fence-checking. The General knows what I'm talking about. And what they do is they routinely fly out of Cuba and what they do is they penetrate Soviet airspace, knowing that our radar is going to pick them up. We scramble our fighters...

FISKE: They penetrate not Soviet airspace, our airspace.

ST. JOHN: Our airspace, yeah. And, of course, the purpose of this is to check our reaction time in terms of how fast we scramble fighters and they're fence-checking. They're checking our fences.

Interestingly enough, the Soviets have become so cynical about this that what these Bear reconnaissance bombers sometimes do is -- these guys are so used to this that when the fighters come up wing-to-wing, what they will do is they will hold up signs and say, "I have to go now," in English. And these airmen of the Soviets take it as a routine joke because they know we're not going to do anything. Anybody that holds up a sign in English and says, "We've got to go now," is a guy that he's not going to get blown out of the air, like 007 did.

FISKE: You're on 88.5 FM.

MAN: I read a while ago an excerpt in the Washington Post -- correct me if I'm wrong. I think it was from The Day of the Cobra. And it was saying something about the fact that the Soviet Union could have been using some type of device to either jam the...

ST. JOHN: It's called meconning. I go into it in the book.

MAN: Right. Then it was from your book.

ST. JOHN: Yes.

MAN: And you all haven't really talked about that very much. I'd like to maybe see if you could.

ST. JOHN: You want to tackle meconning first?

GENERAL ROMER: Go ahead.

ST. JOHN: Meconning is basically an electronic device for allegedly trying to draw aircraft off course. On every map -- as a matter of fact, we know that the Soviets have been trying this -- they've been doing it for years. And because of this knowledge, every single aviation navigation map that's issued in that region has two black boxes with big black letters in it. And the first warning says, "Warning: You may be subject to Soviet interceptor attack." The second box says, "Warning: Your navigational system may be subject to disruption electronically," or something to that degree.

My thesis in the book is that meconning may very well have played a part in the rather extraordinary convergence of circumstances that did take place that carried 007 320 miles off course.

MAN: So, how positive is that?

ST. JOHN: Well, I've done several talk shows like this and I've had several fighter pilots say, "Hey, the Russians tried to mecon us at a given area in the Far East." And as a matter of fact, I had a guy in Dayton, Ohio say he's a former fighter pilot, he had the same thing happen to him. I had a guy who was flying, I think, a C-130 aircraft. He said the same thing happened to him.

GENERAL ROMER: Well, I don't want to quarrel with your thesis.

ST. JOHN: It would make the show much more interesting. We've agreed too much tonight.

GENERAL ROMER: Sure. However, the old fighter pilots you're talking about didn't have inertial navigation systems, or three of them, in operation. And it's pretty hard for some electronic gizmo that the Russians might have to twirl the inertial navigation systems off, because they really aren't built that way. They could distort a radio signal. They could distort a VOR, perhaps, or something of this kind when you're doing a cross-check on them.

But one of the things that I think is very important to understand is that this airplane was not drawn off course all of a sudden at a particular point by anything. The airplane went off course shortly after it left Anchorage, within ten minutes, so-called, and it stayed on one single course for the whole of its flight.

And I want to say to you that if you take a globe in your library -- and I know you've got a globe in your library. Don't drop it. But if you take the globe...and you take a string and you run it from Anchorage to Seoul, you are putting in place with that string what is called the Great Circle route from Anchorage to Seoul. And by a remarkable coincidence and by absolutely astonishing good fortune, you will find that the island of Sakhalin and the place where this airplane was shot down is right under the string, right under the Great Circle route.

So I don't think that anyone pulled this airplane off course. Certainly when he left Anchorage, he was a long distance from any Soviet signals, whether electronic radar or otherwise.

ST. JOHN: That's why I entered the caveat about the substitution of the route card. I still -- and my theory has yet to -- and as you pointed out earlier, General, we may find out in the trial, in these various civil suits, of whether in fact that programmed computerized route card was used on that 747.

FISKE: You know, we all remember those dramatic days...

GENERAL ROMER: I thought you were going to say Lindbergh for a minute.

ST. JOHN: That blew my mind. That really did.

FISKE: He couldn't see out of the front of his plane. He flew at low levels, looked down. Here we're talking about, what, 30,000 feet they fly at?

GENERAL ROMER: Thirty-five, somewhere in that range.

FISKE: We all remember those dramatic days when we have searched for the black box. It presumably was never found. Do you -- let's speculate for a moment, and it has to be sheer speculation. Do you speculate (A) that the Soviets may have found it and may not have revealed it? And (B) what do you think that black box would reveal if in fact we had it?

ST. JOHN: The General believes that the aircraft disintegrated in air after it hit 9000 feet.

Is that right?

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GENERAL ROMER: No. No, no.

ST. JOHN: You think it disintegrated at a higher altitude?

GENERAL ROMER: What I postulate is very simple, in terms of the destruction of the airplane. And it relates to the black box.

First of all, let's deal with the black box. The black box is really two orange boxes. One's a data flight recorder...

[Confusion of voices]

GENERAL ROMER: ...But one is a data flight recorder and the other is a cockpit voice recorder. The cockpit voice recorder eats itself. That is to say, it uses up the tape, and the only thing that you have is the last 30 minutes of the flight. So that whatever happened in Anchorage in terms of what they were doing and all the way through is eaten up. The airline, the international aviation organization is now thinking of making it a little longer. But the only value would have been in terms of the cockpit voice recorder, would have been in determining whether or not the Korean pilots saw the Soviet, the SU-15. That is about all that would have occurred in the previous half-hour.

It might have been that if they were on some sort of spy mission, they could have heard them talking about doing something.

ST. JOHN: Or if they had been hijacked, there might have been conversations that would lead you to believe that.

GENERAL ROMER: But let's deal with the black box. It was, in my opinion, not found. There's no -- the Russians didn't get it and the American Navy didn't get it.

The black boxes had attached to them an acoustical sonar device, and it makes a pinging sound. When you see a television or movie with a submarine in it, a German submarine, it goes ping, ping. And that's this acoustical device. And it is activated when it is immersed in water, the battery is activated, and the battery has a 30-day power phase, and after that it dies. Roughly 30 days.

Now, in the way I saw this happening, as an ancient jet fighter pilot, goes this way: The SU-15 had two rockets, one under each of its wingtips, 24 feet apart. One of them was radar-guided, the other was heat-seeking-guided. And they were Inab (?) rockets, is what they're called, and they have a 70-pound warhead, a very powerful device. And both of them,

apparently, hit the airplane.

Now, the radar weapon, when it was launched, would see ahead of it, because it was behind, would see the biggest thing it could, by its own nature. And that was the fuselage of the aircraft. And it went into the tail of the airplane. As it entered, it detonated. It blew the tail off, and that's why we have a piece of the fin of the tail, which is the only way you can get that piece out of it is to blast it out. There were only five bodies found. And as I see it, they were in the toilets.

ST. JOHN: Pieces of bodies.

GENERAL ROMER: Pieces, and only five, even though there were 269 people on board.

The rocket then, as it was detonating, just kept straight on going because it was going at enormous velocity, but it killed everybody inside instantly. And that was the end of the situation inside, with the exception of the crew, who within a 58-second period made a transmission which said, "All engines," which means they lost their engines and rapid decompression. That was the end of them.

But that the other rocket went into an engine, because it was seeking the river of hot air. And it would have gone into, as I see it, probably the inboard engine, either on the port or the starboard, the left side of the airplane. And because of the position of the wreckage, I think it went into the right side and the wing came off. And so the aircraft just went straight down. It took about three minutes, not 12, to strike.

Now, to go back to the black boxes. The black boxes in the 747 are positioned above the rear door, just ahead of the toilets, which in the normal course of an impact probably would be the place least to be damaged. But in this instance there was a new factor, and that was that it was a rocket that hit it, hit it in the tail, and the very place where the rocket detonated, these black boxes were located. And I wonder, even if the American Navy had found this acoustical device that they heard once, whether they would have still found the black boxes attached to it, because the force of this explosion could have separated it.

ST. JOHN: So you don't buy the report that the spiraling -- that a low-level Japanese defense radar followed that aircraft into a spiraling motion?

GENERAL ROMER: No. No. There was Japanese authority which indicated that the airplane went straight in and it took a three-minute run, which is all it would take under normal circumstances.

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FISKE: You're on 88.5 FM.

MAN: By the way, your phone connection is much better than it has been recently.

ST. JOHN: He paid his bill.

GENERAL ROMER: Maybe the KGB is not bugging it, or something.

MAN: Let me bring up two related points. One is I think Jeffrey had a hard time understanding the President's lack of firmness in terms of his reaction.

ST. JOHN: I understood it too well.

MAN: Well, my point is that the United States has tended not to react in a really tough way, for a lot of reasons. You go back to the Korean incident in '69 where the Koreans shot down a plane. Now, there was a case tailor-made for a reaction. It just came after the seizure of the American ship and then the letting go of those people in December.

ST. JOHN: The Pueblo.

MAN: The Pueblo. Yes. And a couple months after Nixon came in, these Korean jets roared out of the Sea of Japan, miles away from the coast, and blew this plane out of the sky.

So, it hasn't been unusual for provocations to have occurred and for us, for various reasons, not to react in ways which might have maybe even played into the Soviets' hands. So that follows a long policy thing.

The other thing is I tend to agree with the General in terms of the path of the plane. I think that plane was off course from the beginning.

And I also think two things: (A) the Russians very well knew that it was a passenger plane; (B) their lower command saw this plane getting away, in terms of it getting out of Sakhalin airspace, and they probably felt if they didn't do anything, somebody was going to pay with their head, or something like that.

But finally, I wanted to make the point that I am really upset about the Democratic Party. They could condemn Reagan for making one statement about the evil empire, but they couldn't even mention one of their own Congressmen, do anything at their convention that even spoke of this guy as one of the people who were shot down, let alone the incident as such.

ST. JOHN: May I compound the political and moral felony for all of us?

Geraldine Ferraro, who is now Walter Mondale's running mate, lost her family doctor of 26 years, Dr. Michael Trupen (?), and his wife, aboard 007. The transcript of this tearful and very moving eulogy was in sharp contrast to two things: Geraldine Ferraro's refusal to vote for anything even approximating a mild sanction against the Soviets on September 15th, 1983, when the resolution of condemnation was passed in the House, and, moreover, she was unwilling to even mention the fact that here was a man who had delivered her own three children, could not at least mention in the same breath with Normandy and Vietnam the fact that 269 people had been massacred.

Now, let me deal with my undue harsh criticism of Reagan. Let me ask -- let me present very, very succinctly, I hope, my perception about why the reaction took place. Let's take, first of all, cold-blooded politics.

Mr. Reagan was painted as a nuclear Napoleon by his Democratic opposition, who, by the way, while doing this, went along with this non-resolution, is what I call it, his non-resolution of condemnation. They realized, his handlers at the White House realized that they were going into the Democrats' hands and the nuclear Napoleon caricature if he allowed his actions to correspond to his rhetoric.

The second aspect of the reaction, the mild reaction of the Reagan Administration was a bill of goods sold to him by Secretary Shultz and the State Department.

You know, by the way, Mr. Shultz was literally the commanding -- commander-in-chief of this whole political operation from the very beginning. It was he that decided to release the transcripts. He told me that in an interview.

They decided that, yes, it's terrible that they have destroyed 269 lives, and how barbaric this is. But the nuclear arms reduction talks are far more important because the whole planet is at stake. Not realizing, of course, that, if you follow my thesis, that this was a deliberate act of airborne terrorism. They totally misread this.

This studied incompetence on the part of Administrations going back to '69 leads me to exactly the opposite conclusion that you have presented, that this has been a matter of policy. I think it's been a matter of bad policy because --the policy has been bad because the perception has been wrong.

FISKE: Jeffrey, in your book, you say that you

attempted to put some questions to the President concerning this. And you spoke to the White House and they seemed cooperative. And then you spoke to Karna Small at one time. And when it became apparent to her that you were devoting some considerable space in your book to Larry McDonald, she lost interest in cooperating with you. Why?

ST. JOHN: Well, simply by reason of the fact that they didn't want to be tarred with the Birch brush. And my interest in McDonald has nothing to do with his ideology. He happens to be now a historical figure. He is the only elected official in United States history to be murdered by a foreign power. And plus the irony, of course, was his career and his warnings about the Soviets, and what have you.

Those people at the White House did not want Reagan to get anywhere near this issue.

By the way, as an update, I made a second request. On the first anniversary, the United States Times is publishing, as you might imagine, a rather lengthy year-later issue of this whole tragedy. I made a second request. I asked not for 20 questions this time, but 25 questions, 'cause a lot had happened. And you know, I got this sweet, nice little letter from a gentleman by the name of Mr. McManus, who is the Deputy Communications Director, and he said, "We have taken this under considerable consideration, but we do not think that the President should answer questions at this time."

Now, I ask you, Fred -- I know that you think I'm unduly harsh on Mr. Reagan, but I ask you, does that not smack of a certain kind of callous? I mean here is one of the most important foreign policy crises ever to be confronted by Mr. Reagan, and he does not -- I didn't want an interview. I didn't want to debate it. You know how Washington reporters are. If they can't get a personal interview, they say, "The hell with it." I wasn't interested in that. I was interested in just getting his response.

Secretary Shultz answered my questions because of one person. His name happens to be John Hughes. I've known John Hughes for 20 years when he was with the Christian Science Monitor, and he bugged Shultz over and over again until he sat down before he went to Japan with the President last November and he answered the questions. I think they were inadequate responses.

But I was genuinely interested in getting the Administration's point of view, and I didn't get it.

FISKE: You're on 88.5 FM.

MAN: The mysterious P.Q. Mann, a very shady character, I might add, was interviewed over the telephone by Elizabeth Gray of the CBC program As It Happens a few days after the publication of his article in Defense Attache magazine. Did any of you hear it?

ST. JOHN: No, sir, I didn't.

MAN: It comes on 88.5 right after Fred's program.

ST. JOHN: What did he say?

MAN: Well, he was talking his spiel about his conspiracy theory, you know, that the KAL 007 was on a spy mission, as you mentioned.

ST. JOHN: Did he identify his true self?

MAN: No. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Gray, the good radio journalist as she was and is, asked him to reveal his true identity, because he was going under this pseudonym of P.Q. Mann. And, of course, he politely refused. He speaks English with a British accent, by the way...

GENERAL ROMER: Of course he does. Of course he does.

MAN: And by the way, if you'd like to hear that tape, maybe you could call the CBC and they might make it available to you. It was about a week after the article was published.

ST. JOHN: That's interesting.

FISKE: You're on the air.

MAN: It seems to me that simple logic teaches that there was fault on both sides in that incident. There's no way that that computer could have been programmed wrong. I mean to say that the KGB substituted some cards or something is really reaching too far.

ST. JOHN: Well, not necessarily. It could be done. General Romer does not deny the fact that it could be done. It's just the fact whether it was done is another matter entirely different.

MAN: But reason tells us that there is no way that that plane wasn't programmed to fly the route that it followed.

And the other thing is, reason tells us that the Far East Command was under orders to shoot down intruding aircraft if they didn't respond to warnings. So I mean...

ST. JOHN: But, sir, the intercepts clearly indicate that there were no warnings. When that SU-15 fighter pulled its landing gears up into its fuselage, it was out to shoot that airplane down.

MAN: Excuse me. But the plane flew in front of the KAL 007...

ST. JOHN: It did not. No, sir. The intercepts do not show that.

MAN: The transcript of the radio transmissions shows that it crossed the path in front of the aircraft before it dropped back to fire its rockets.

FISKE: General, you're shaking your head negatively, too.

GENERAL ROMER: Yeah. The...

MAN: I read the transcripts of the radio transmissions published in the paper.

GENERAL ROMER: Well, look, the best interpretations of the tapes and the diagrams that have been made as a result of the interpretation of the tapes indicate that the Soviet aircraft did come up from behind, went over on the starboard, or right-hand, side first, came up parallel to the airplane.

MAN: Exactly. In other words, the airplane knew that it was being tailed by a Russian fighter.

GENERAL ROMER: That depends on whether or not the Russian fighter gave any signal by flashing his lights. And there's no indication he did that.

ST. JOHN: And he didn't fire rockets, because SU-15 does not have cannons in that particular...

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, yes.

ST. JOHN: Does it?

GENERAL ROMER: Oh, yeah. He had cannons slung under the airplane. There's no question about that.

ST. JOHN: But Ogarkov in Moscow said that they fired cannon bursts. And at that altitude at that time of night, the pilots would have seen the flashes, would they not?

GENERAL ROMER: No, not necessarily. We're getting off

the caller's subject slightly. But if you're firing cannon from a fighter aircraft going at a substantial speed, and in this instance over 500 miles an hour, because he's sitting behind him, first of all, he has to be very close, because the cannon shells, their trajectory, they do not go very far before they start to drop off. So he'd have to be very close.

If there wer tracer -- what he would attempt to do if he was warning was he'd have to get very close so he could put it right where he wanted it ahead. And he was behind when he did this.

In my opinion (A) he had cannon. The transcripts, as they were ultimately interpreted on or about September the 11th by the State Department, again, indicated that he did in fact say he was firing the cannon. But in my opinion, he was attempting to hit the airplane, not to warn it. Because to fire tracers is not one of the recognized methods of warning another airplane. If the pilot of the Korean 747 had seen these things flashing by -- he was an old fighter pilot -- he probably would have hauled back -- flicked off the autopilot, hauled back and started evasive action.

ST. JOHN: And the intercepts do clearly indicate the fighter pilot saying, "Now I'll try my missiles."

GENERAL ROMER: Yes, "Now I will try rockets." But in any event...

MAN: Tell me, gentlemen, can you tell me -- there was map published in [unintelligible] showing that the KAL 007 made a left-hand turn and flew directly over Vladivostok from west to east. Is that true that it followed that path?

GENERAL ROMER: No, it is not. Again, I have that very map in my book as an illustration. And it is the Ogarkov map and it shows the route of the aircraft going across Kamchatka, down toward Hokkaido, and doing a right-hand, or westerly, turn to go over a major installation on Sakhalin Island.

What I have said is that the interpretation of the fighter pilot, pilot 805's transmissions to the ground, to Deputat, indicate quite clearly that during the whole time he was tracking it, which is during that relevant period, the aircraft was flying on 240 and never made any turn whatsoever.

FISKE: You're on 88.5 FM.

WOMAN: I have two quick factual questions and a comment. (A) What ever happened to celestial navigation?

(B) World Press Review, in March, picked up an article

from The Guardian on this by a Mr. R.W. Johnson of Magdalen College, Oxford. Does either of your authors know anything about Mr. Johnson or his credentials?

ST. JOHN: As a matter of fact, his credentials are rather thin. And also, if you read -- did you read the article?

WOMAN: Oh, yes.

ST. JOHN: He gives you an exposition of his point of view, and then he tells you, "Well, this might not have happened. It's only a theory."

WOMAN: Okay.

ST. JOHN: And the evidence that he presented, as far as I'm concerned, is not basic and primary to understanding what actually physically happened.

GENERAL ROMER: But my dear fellow, he is from Britain, you see, and therefore he is an authority about everything he says.

WOMAN: Is he a historian? Is he a navigator? What is he?

GENERAL ROMER: Who knows? He's British, and therefore everybody in the United States believes that he has credibility, no matter what.

The first question you asked was, what happened to celestial navigation? The answer is very simple. It disappeared with the inertial navigation systems coming into play. Nobody carries a sextant any longer. They have the three inertial navigation systems.

WOMAN: All of which work all of the time.

GENERAL ROMER: All of which work all of the time, and according to the manufacturers are infallible. If there's any error, it's always human.

WOMAN: Okay. And besides, you have the little thing that reads you the map off the ground.

GENERAL ROMER: That's the -- yes. That's the radar in the mapping mode, the weather radar. Exactly.

WOMAN: I think there is a flaw in the argument that anything they could have found out by the 007 flight they could find out through all this sophisticated electronic technology.

ST. JOHN: How so?

WOMAN: And that is, if what you want to find out is what the other guy will do if you do thus and such, you may have to try it out and see.

ST. JOHN: I hardly think they would do it with war games in a civilian -- look, compared to the supersonic fighter aircraft that we have, you don't use a 747 to test an opponent's capability. You use something more sophisticated.

WOMAN: Or intentions.

GENERAL ROMER: And furthermore, the Soviets, through Colonel General Romanov, who died recently, but he was the major air defense force spokesman, their chief of staff, he complained after this event that the American RC-135's out of Shemya had been going into Soviet airspace on any number of occasions and had all of their air defense forces all twiddly-bang and on edge because they were doing these intrusions.

So, why would anybody send in a 747 when the RC-135s had been doing the job very effectively as it is?

ST. JOHN: And has far more sophisticated snooping gear than you would find or could possibly hide in a 747.

FISKE: Ma'am, thank you very much for your call.

And gentlemen, thank you for a very, very stimulating discussion....