

The following interview was recorded between Major Oreathouse and A/3C Richeson on 23 November 1955.

MAJ OREATHOUSE: Would you please state your name, rank, service number and station of duty.

A/3C RICHESON: My name is Robert B. Richeson, Airman Third Class, AF 19515711. My home base is Nellis Air Force Base. Duty is control tower operator.

MAJ O: I'm Major Oreathouse from Norton AFB Investigation Team on this C-54 accident that occurred on 17 November. I wanted to ask you some questions about what you know about this accident and some of the conditions that you might have had at that time. First, did you have any direct communications with the C-54 9068 at any time?

A/3C R: No, Sir. We had no direct communication with him. We did hear him call Watertown several times.

MAJ O: Did you hear him call any other stations besides Watertown?

A/3C R: No, Sir, I did not hear him.

MAJ O: Now, your duty in the tower is such that you would personally call him if you had received a call from 9068.

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, I work both positions "A" and "B."

MAJ O: "A" and "B." What is the difference between those?

A/3C R: "A" position, Sir, is where you handle the aircraft, or rather are in direct contact with the aircraft and give out instructions, and "B" position is where you receive other such information as flight plans, IFR clearances, and other things pertaining to departure or arrival of aircraft.

MAJ O: You worked both positions that morning?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir.

MAJ O: Were you working on "B" position when the dispatch from Nellis Base Operations called about 9068?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, I was working the "B" position.

MAJ O: What information did they give you at that time?

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A/3C R: Well, they gave me the number 9068 and the type of aircraft, but he did not give me the ETA. He said that the reason for the ETA missing was that this was the C-54's alternate, or 068's alternate. His planned destination had a low overcast. He was going to make this field his alternate base.

MAJ G: Did they call this in as being a C-54?

A/3C R: No, Sir, it was an R-5D, I think.

MAJ G: Well, that's a Navy aircraft. Did they say a Navy aircraft?

A/3C R: No, Sir, he didn't. He just said 9068, an R-5D. He called R-5D but it was really a C-54.

MAJ G: Did you understand that at any time you were to try to contact this C-54, 9068 to divert him, that is, for the Nellis tower to divert him to Nellis?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, I was not given any instructions at all pertaining to trying to contact him.

MAJ G: Do you recall about what time it was that Base Operations Dispatch called you about the aircraft?

A/3C R: I'd say approximately between 0800 and 0830, Sir. I couldn't say for sure.

MAJ G: Was that the only call that you received about the aircraft, this 0800 to 0830 call, or say before 0900?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, that's the only one that I received.

MAJ G: Could someone else have worked there that might have received a call from Base Operations at this time?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, they could have been working here.

MAJ G: Who would that have been?

A/3C R: That would have been either Sgt Arnsho or Sgt Hillman.

MAJ G: When you took this call from Base Operations do you know who it was that you talked to?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir. Sgt Sanchez. W.S. are his initials.

MAJ G: And you received only one call then.

A/3C R: Yes, Sir.

MAJ G: Are you a qualified limited weather observer for tower operation?

A/3C R: Yes, Sir, I am a limited weather observer.

MAJ G: Did you recall what the weather might have been around here that morning?

A/3C R: I would say it was approximately 15,000 overcast. I wouldn't say for sure.

MAJ G: Do you recall seeing the Charleston Mountains that morning at any time from the tower?

A/3C R: No, Sir, I don't. I usually look over there just to check visibility or something like that, but I don't remember recalling the weather.

MAJ G: Have you ever had any other traffic through here going to the Nevada test sight area where that you would control them, or rather Nellis tower would control, or cancel their IFR clearance or anything like that?

A/3C R: No, Sir, not that I know of. They usually call in to Las Vegas radio to cancel their IFR and if they can't get contact with them, well, then they cancel with us.

MAJ G: I see. Now, you've been working how long here at Nellis?

A/3C R: Approximately three months.

MAJ G: And how long have you been in the AACS tower operation?

A/3C R: Approximately three months. I just got out of tower school, Sir.

MAJ G: Do you have anything else to offer that might help in the investigation?

A/3C R: No, Sir.

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Nathan C. Chesthouse

NATHAN C. CHESTHOUSE

Major, USAF