

Warped



by Scott McCullar

Flights lead to death

United Press International
LAS TROJES, Honduras—American military personnel have made frequent helicopter trips to the tense border area near where a U.S. Army helicopter, residents said Sunday.

The residents of Las Trojes said Americans, some in military uniforms and others in civilian clothes, arrived at least three times in December aboard helicopters delivering supplies to rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government.

Faustino Culix, 70, caretaker of a rebel supply center in the town, said the Americans regularly began delivering U.S. supplies to the rebel-controlled area about one year ago, although the supply depot was not set up until October.

"Sometimes they come dressed in civilian clothes and sometimes they are in uniform," Culix said.

The Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) rebels have reportedly received over \$25 million in covert CIA aid over the past two years.

Most of the residents interviewed said the Americans arrived in Honduran military helicopters, but Domingo Alvarez, 38, said he had also seen U.S. Army helicopters carrying Nicaraguan rebels and Honduran military.

"The gringos sometimes land in the plaza, but normally they land in the football field" or a local supply center airstrip, said Alvarez.

Las Trojes, 3 miles from where a U.S. Army helicopter was shot down by Sandinista fighters Wednesday after it strayed over Nicaraguan territory, is used by the rebels to stage attacks inside Nicaragua.

Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Schwab was killed when an OH-58 light observation helicopter landed 200 yards inside the Honduran border and ground fire from Sandinista fighters in Nicaragua.

Last Friday, FDN leader Edgar Chamorro said Schwab's helicopter had flown over the area to inspect a road under construction that leads to Las Trojes through an area less vulnerable to attack.

Col. James Strachan, spokesman for joint U.S. Honduran military maneuvers Friday admitted "certain activities" were carried out by Americans taking part in the Big Blue II maneuvers as close as 2 miles to the Nicaraguan border.

U.S. officials maintain Schwab was flying between airstrips at San Lorenzo and Aguacate, and was some miles off course at the time of the crash.

The base at Aguacate is reportedly used by both the FDN rebels and the CIA in their effort to topple the leftist Sandinistas.

Honduran army chief Gustavo Alvarez Martinez said U.S. officials admitted the helicopter had unknowingly strayed into Nicaraguan territory because of high winds and thick cloud cover.

Singer loses court battle over contract

United Press International

ORLANDO, Fla. — Country-western singer Hank Williams Jr. has been ordered to pay \$98,606 for not showing up at an 1982 outdoor concert that he maintained was cancelled because of bad weather.

An Orange County jury ruled Saturday that Williams, 34, breached his contract with B & K Productions of Kissimmee by not appearing at an April 10, 1982 concert at the Central Florida Fairgrounds.

The jury awarded the promoters \$98,606 in damages. Court records show the company lost more than \$100,000 because of Williams' cancellation.

Williams lost a countersuit charging he was entitled to \$13,000 under an agreement with promoters that guaranteed him the full amount in case of "inclement weather." But the jury said he could keep \$11,500 advanced to him.

The ruling marked the second time in three months that Williams was found guilty of breaking a performance contract. In October, a district court jury in Sherman awarded \$160,000 to a club owner who charged Williams went on state too drunk to sing.

"We felt we were going to win

all along," said J. Michael Malone, an attorney for B & K Productions. The promoters said they were left with thousands of angry fans and 200 cases of hot dogs after the cancellation.

Williams and his attorneys could be reached for comment after the ruling.

During the four-day trial, Williams had testified he was told the concert was canceled because of bad weather and that the wet stage would be too dangerous for electronic equipment.

But Williams' attorneys failed to produce a witness who could convince the jury the stage was unsafe.

In addition, the promoters maintained it had rained three days before the concert but not on the day of the concert.

The entertainer was staying with relatives in Alabama the morning of the concert. He testified he had planned to fly to Orlando in his private plane for the 6 p.m. concert, but stayed in Alabama when his managers informed him of the cancellation.

Williams testified he "absolutely" did not purposely refuse to appear at the concert, noting his 8-year-old son, Sheldon, was excited about the Orlando trip because Williams had promised to take him to Walt Disney World.

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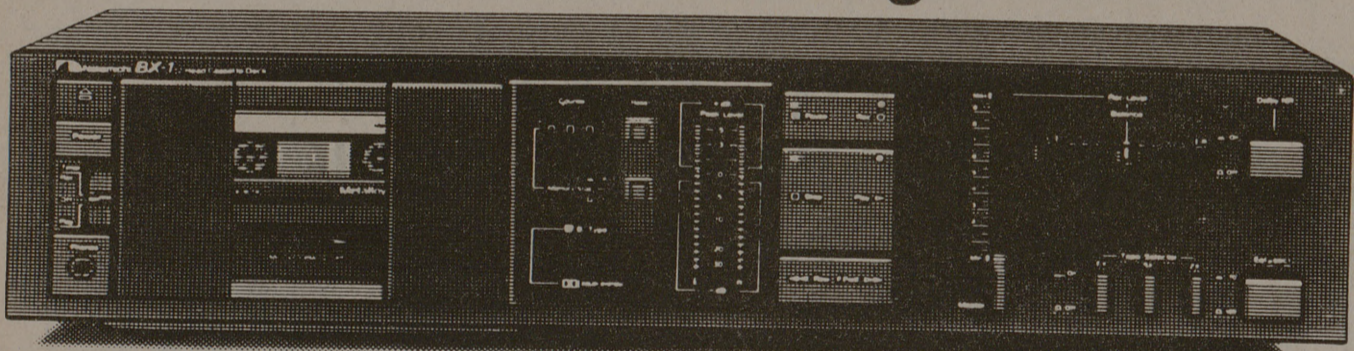
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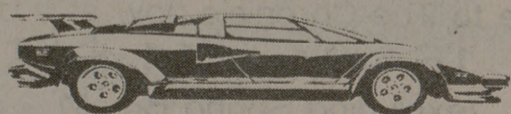
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