

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: PRIORITY

Date: 01/07/2002

To: Criminal Investigative

Attn: VCMO Unit

Counterterrorism

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From: Tampa
PRA

Contact: SA



Approved By:



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Drafted By:



adw

Case ID #: 149A-TP-55348

Title: CHARLES JOHN BISHOP-DECEASED (MINOR) aka
Charles J. Bishara;
THEFT AND DESTRUCTION OF AIRCRAFT;
CRASH OF CESSNA - 172 (2371N);
St. Petersburg/Tampa, Florida;
01/05/2002

Synopsis: To provide initial report of the theft and subsequent
crash of Cessna 172 on the early evening of 01/05/2002 at Tampa,
Florida.

INCIDENT

At approximately 4:45 p.m., on 01/05/2002, captioned
subject Charles J. Bishop, a fifteen year old white male arrived
at National Aviation, St. Petersburg/Clearwater International
Airport, 14609 Airport Parkway, Number 209, Clearwater, Florida
for a previously scheduled training session with a flight
instructor. At approximately 5:00 p.m., from witness accounts,
Bishop departed St. Pete/Clearwater International Airport without
obtaining a ground or take-off clearance. After take-off Bishop
piloted the Cessna 172 to the east/southeast across Tampa Bay.
Bishop continued on a flight path that took him over MacDill Air
Force Base (Headquarters of Central Command) at a low altitude..
He eventually flew northeast towards the main downtown area of
Tampa where he crashed the Cessna 172 into the 28th floor of the
Bank of America Plaza, 400 North Ashley Street, Tampa, Florida.
Prior to the crash the Cessna was under surveillance by a United
States Coast Guard helicopter. The Coast Guard helicopter

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attempted to intercept Bishop and visually signaled him to land immediately. Bishop died in the crash. The incident caused substantial damage to offices located on the 28th and 29th floors of the forty-two story Bank of America Plaza. There were no other injuries or deaths caused by the crash. The incident received local and national news coverage.

RESPONSE

Upon being notified by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, FBI Agents from the Pinellas County Resident Agency, Clearwater, Florida were dispatched to the St.Pete/Clearwater International Airport. By 6:15 p.m. a coordinated investigation was instituted involving the FBI, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, National Transportation Safety Board, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Tampa Headquarters City Agents coordinated other efforts with the Tampa Police Department, Tampa Fire Department, MacDill Air Force Base, and other Federal, State, and local agencies participating in the crime scene at the Bank of America building.

INVESTIGATION TO DATE

A. BACKGROUND ON SUBJECT:

Subject: Charles J. Bishop (Deceased)
AKA: Charles J. Bishara
Race: White
Sex: Male
DOB: 02/08/1986
SSAN: [REDACTED] b2
Age: 15 years
Residence: [REDACTED] b7C
Palm Harbor, Florida 34685
Home telephone number: [REDACTED]
School: East Lake High School
Palm Harbor, Florida

[REDACTED]

(Unknown location)

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bishop was an honor student at East Lake High School, Palm Harbor, Florida. According to [REDACTED] he has not had contact with [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] To date, limited interviews have been conducted with teachers and fellow students at East Lake High School. These interviews have not revealed any reason as to why Bishop perpetrated this disastrous act. Bishop's instructors describe him as being a bright young man who did not appear to have many friends and who basically kept to himself. His [REDACTED] teacher stated Bishop told her that he was an Arab American. During a preliminary interview with [REDACTED] she mentioned that Bishop's

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The two adult figures in Bishop's life, [REDACTED] could not provide any information as to Bishop supporting the activities of terrorist groups, Usama Bin Laden or other groups having a propensity for violence or terrorist activities.

[REDACTED]

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Preliminary investigation failed to reflect that Bishop was suffering from any mental illness. Bishop was taking a prescribed medication for acne known as Accutane. It was also determined that Bishop had utilized a drug known as Predisone. The results of autopsy/toxicology examinations on Bishop has not been completed to date.

Tampa Division is continuing logical interviews of teachers and students that might lend an explanation as to Bishop's conduct.

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FLIGHT SCHOOL

Bishop's flight instructors at National Aviation St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport, 14609 Airport Parkway, Suite 209, Clearwater, Florida, telephone number (727) 531-3545 were interviewed. The total number of flight hours that Bishop has accumulated has yet to be determined. Flight instructors claimed that since approximately March, Bishop has been taking lessons and has accumulated approximately sixteen hours of flight time. Bishop was not qualified to fly solo (either by FAA regulations or his ability) a single engine Cessna 172. Bishop's grandmother paid for Bishop's flight training. The aircraft that Bishop stole from the airport and subsequently crashed was a newer Cessna 172. The aircraft was valued in excess of \$185,000. Witnesses report that Bishop had contacted the flight school previously and signed up with an instructor reserving the plane from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., on 01/05/2002. Ground personnel at the school reported that Bishop obtained the keys to the airplane and proceeded to the aircraft to conduct a normal pre-flight examination. Ground personnel observed Bishop locate the Cessna 172 aircraft on the ramp, untie it, and depart immediately without conducting a pre-flight examination. The aircraft had approximately 20 gallons of fuel upon departure.

From interviews conducted of the flight instructors, none could provide a reasonable explanation or any indication whatsoever that Bishop suffered from a mental illness or had any suicidal tendencies. Instructors described Bishop as being a nice kid who at times, could be a little arrogant and who expressed interest in pursuing an aviation career. One instructor described Bishop as possibly not being capable of safely landing a Cessna 172 except in perfect wind and weather conditions. The instructor described Bishop as being mostly interested in doing touch-and-go landings. Bishop was transported to the flight school by his grandmother, who waited at the airport while Bishop received his flight instruction.

During the ride to the airport, Bishop commented to his grandmother that in the event that he should not return from his flight, he did not want his father or his enemies invited to his funeral. Bishop's grandmother associated his comment with a teenager joking about having a fear of flying and receiving flight instruction. She did not put any weight to this comment as being an indication that Bishop was on a suicide mission.

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Through coordinated efforts with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, other flight academies in the immediate St. Pete/Clearwater area are being contacted as to flight instruction received by Bishop and any indication as to his propensity to commit the act that he perpetrated on 01/05/2002.

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTIGATION

Logical neighborhood investigation was conducted in the vicinity of [redacted] and [redacted] residence. Neighbors described Bishop as being a young man who basically kept to himself. They stated that they would occasionally see Bishop walking the family dogs. The neighborhood investigation failed to provide any derogatory information concerning Bishop or his family or to provide any reasonable explanation as to why Bishop stole an aircraft and purposely crashed it into a building.

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CRIME SCENE

A crime scene investigation was conducted at the site of the crash by the Tampa Police Department in conjunction with Tampa FBI Agents. Upon recovery of Bishop's body, a suicide note was located among his belongings. The following represents Bishop's verbatim suicide note:

"There will be more coming! Al Qaeda and other organizations have met with me several times to discuss the option of me joining. I didn't.

This is an operation done by me only. I had no other help, although I am acting on their behalf.

Osama bin Laden is planning on blowing up the Super Bowl with an antiquated nuclear bomb left over from the 1967 Israeli - Syrian war.

I have prepared this statement in regards to the acts I am about to commit. First of all, Osama Bin Laden is absolutely justified in the terror he has caused on 9-11. He has brought a mighty nation to its knees! God blesses him and the others who helped make September 11th happen.

The U.S. will have to face the consequences for its horrific actions against the Palestinian people and Iraq by its allegiance with the monstrous Israelis - who want nothing short of world domination!

You will pay - God help you - and I will make you pay!"

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No incendiary or explosive devices were found among the wreckage. The NTSB and the FAA are continuing their examination of the wreckage.

COMPUTER EXAMINATION

Based upon a Consent to Search, computers were seized at [redacted] and [redacted] residence. These computers are currently being examined by Tampa Cart Personnel. To date there is no indication that Bishop participated in any known terrorism related "chat rooms" or e-mailed anyone connected with terrorist activities.

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Cell phone and toll records are also being examined.

OTHER INVESTIGATIVE EFFORTS

On 01/07/2002, Tampa Division held a meeting with all concerned Federal, State, and Local agencies to coordinate remaining investigative efforts. Resulting from this meeting was a general consensus that Bishop was not a terrorist participating in an act of terrorism in support of Usama Bin Laden or the Al Qaeda. Of concern was that the investigation make a reasonable determination as to whether or not Bishop through the internet, chat rooms, etc., participated with a group of other young people who might have the propensity to carry out an act of terrorism similar to Bishop's. To date this investigation has not provided any indication that Bishop participated in a concerted effort with other individuals. During the upcoming week the investigation will focus on Bishop's fellow students, school authorities, and on any other individuals who might be able to shed light on Bishop's personality, activities, or any connection he may have had to terrorist activities or other individuals seeking notoriety as Bishop obviously did. FBIHQ will be kept advised. In the event that the investigation does not result in any other organized groups or efforts on behalf of Bishop, this investigation will be logically terminated.

Set Lead 1:

TAMPA

AT TAMPA, FLORIDA

Investigation continuing.

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LEAD(s) :

Set Lead 2: (Adm)

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE

AT WASHINGTON, DC

Read and clear.

Set Lead 3: (Adm)

COUNTERTERRORISM

AT WASHINGTON, DC

Read and clear.

Set Lead 4:

BOSTON

AT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Boston Division will attempt to locate and interview [redacted] address unknown, allegedly residing in [redacted] Massachusetts.

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The Boston Division will attempt to locate and interview [redacted] white male, DOB [redacted]

Both of the above individuals should be interviewed as to any reasonable explanation they could provide as to why Bishop stole a Cessna 172 aircraft and piloted it across MacDill Air Force Base, subsequently crashing the aircraft into the Bank of America building in Tampa, Florida.

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