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February 8, 1940

My dear Mr. Bevis:

Mrs. Roosevelt asks me to acknowledge your letter of February 3 and to express her regret that she cannot see you. Her time is so filled for the next few days that she cannot fit in anything more, and she is leaving early next week on a holiday.

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary to
Mrs. Roosevelt

Mr. Palmer Bevis
122 East 42d Street
New York
N.Y.

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As busy at present & guests away next week for holidays

February 3, 1940

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

My services have been retained by the Amelia Earhart Foundation of Oakland, California, to direct an immediate campaign for $150,000 under the leadership of Commander George Noville to solve, if possible, the mystery of Miss Earhart's disappearance. Grounds for the Expedition are contained in the enclosed Memorandum.

I would so much like to discuss the whole matter with you before proceeding further with our plans for the campaign. Could you conveniently see me either in Washington or New York some time next week?

Most sincerely,

Palmer Bevis

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

GROUNDS FOR A NEW SEARCH FOR AMELIA EARHART

The hope that Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Captain Fred Noonan, may be found alive on some tiny island in the South Pacific is a thrilling hope, one that awakens sentiment in the American public who knew her as the heroine of the skies, and particularly strikes a sentimental chord in those who knew and loved her before her disappearance.

There would be sadness in the thought, too, for she has been given up, long since. The hope would appear to be vain, born of wishful thinking.

But there are cold, indusputable facts which have never been made public, and which must demonstrate to anyone of open mind that no sufficient search was ever made for Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan, and that either they are now alive on land in the lonely, untravelled nowhere of their disappearance, or have died since, praying that they would be found.

It is the purpose of this brief memorandum to state these facts, in their order and without elaboration, and to let them argue the case for a new search.

Before offering the evidence, however, it might be well to list those who believe that either Miss Earhart may be found alive or that evidence to solve the mystery may be found, and that a new search should be made as soon as possible.

This group includes the following:

Amelia Earhart's mother, who has made an intimate study of the data and believes steadfastly that her daughter will be found.

Clarence S. Williams, pilot and navigator who charted Miss Earhart's course around the world.

Paul Mantz, Miss Earhart's flying instructor and friend, who accompanied her on her last flight to Honolulu.

E. H. Dimity, long time friend of Miss Earhart, who established, and is the President of, the AMELIA EARHART FOUNDATION, in Oakland.

Walter E. McMenamy, radio expert who was in constant touch with her by air on her solo flight from Honolulu to the mainland, and who probably saved her life by quick thinking on that occasion, when she was flying off her course. McMenamy also helped guide by radio the first Clipper ship flight to Honolulu. Mr. McMenamy charted Miss Earhart's radio course around the world, and heard her last signals.

Margot De Carie, Amelia Earhart's secretary.

The reader, perhaps surprised at the suggestion that there may be good reasons for believing Miss Earhart still will be found, no doubt will have many questions in his mind, which this memorandum will seek to answer. Some of the questions are:

1. Didn't Navy and Coast Guard ships search the area where she might have gone down, completely but fruitlessly?

2. If she landed on an island, how could Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan be alive now, without food or water?

3. If they are still alive, why have they not been heard from?

The first important fact to be recorded was known to only a few at the time of Miss Earhart's flight and disappearance, has never been made generally known to the public, and is of tremendous importance. This fact is that Miss Earhart's radio equipment was such that the plane could broadcast only from the air or while on land. The plane could not have broadcasted from water. This is proven not only by the testimony of those who helped in the flight preparations, but by the Lockheed factory which made the plane and by the radio expert who installed the equipment. The radio transmitter had to be powered by the motor generator, which would be submerged and inactive in the water.

The importance of this fact is, briefly, that if it can be proved beyond doubt that the Earhart plane DID broadcast radio signals many hours after it had to be down somewhere, the plane must have been on land.

The second important fact is that the Navy and Coast Guard search was limited almost wholly to the sea area. The plane could not have been down in this area and still transmit radio signals to the world. This fact is borne out by the original log of the Coast Guard Cutter "Itasca", which was assigned to the flight and to the search and cleared the messages from the rescue ships and airplanes. It is further shown by the affidavits on file in Superior Court, Los Angeles County, by Coast Guard and Navy Officials. Apparently unaware of the significance of the fact that the plane could not have broadcast signals from the water, and dismissing or ignorant of evidence that such signals had been heard, the Coast Guard official testified his belief that Miss Earhart had gone down at sea.

The third fact is that radio signals were received from the Earhart plane days after it had landed. These signals were heard in various parts of the world, by several radio operators, including ships at sea, government stations, and her radio contact man, Walter McMenamy. Proof of this is in the official records and in affidavits. These signals, and the time they were heard, will be described later.

These facts can and will be proved, and they lead directly to the conclusion that the Earhart plane landed in a place not searched, and must be still there with its occupants alive or dead. Their last radio signal had a decided ripple or sputter, which any radio expert recognizes immediately as evidence that the power was failing.

Immediately two questions arise. First, what chance would they have for survival on a tiny, deserted island, with little food and no water? History provides an answer. There are many cases on record where persons shipwrecked, stranded, and believed

lost were found years later. One party, without food, lived on fish, shellfish, and bird's eggs, on captured rainwater for drinking. A monotonous diet, but they survived and were rescued from an island which appeared to be incapable of sustain-life.

The second question is: If they are safe, why have they not been picked up, or heard from? There is a simple answer to this. Their course took them over sea wastes, strewn with hundreds of islands, which had never been seen from the air, and parts of which have never been visited by civilized man; hundreds of miles from the steamer lanes; thousands from communication. Many of the islands on their course have never been charted, and appear on no map.

What could anyone do but wait, and pray for rescur?

To complete the story, let us review the events of the disappearance, and the search, point by point.

Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan had an excellent ship, a Lockheed Electra, powered with two 550-horsepower motors and equipped with the latest instruments devised. They cruised at an average speed of 150 miles an hour. At no time during the flight, even when their gas supply was running low and they were lost, did they report any trouble of any kind, with the motor or otherwise. No wreckage of the plane has ever been sighted or found, no evidence of an explosion or of a sudden crash in the sea caused by faulty motors.

The two left Miami, Florida, on their flight around the world June 1, 1937. The first leg of the trip, to South America, was completed without difficulty. On their flight 1900 miles across the South Atlantic to Africa, it was reported the plane's radio did not function properly, but the span was successfully accomplished. The trip then took them across Africa and to India. In the Bay of Bengal, the plane encountered a monsoon which forced it close to the water, but their objective was won, and the fliers safely reached Lae, British New Guinea.

At Lae they drew breath for the most difficult hop of the trip, one never before attempted. This was a 2,570 mile flight from Lae to Howland Island, a distance greater than from Los Angeles to New York, over a lonely, poorly charted sea. The navigation must be perfect, for they were aiming at a pinpoint in the ocean, tiny Howland Island, less than two miles square and 20 feet above sea level at its highest point. Their aim, at such a distance, must be flawless.

Few navigators would stake their lives, as Captain Noonan did, on such a gamble.

Navigators say that even with the gentle prevailing winds that were blowing at the time, a drift of ten degrees off course in such a distance might easily occur, even with most expert navigation.

If the plane did drift, from its last known bearing, it might have come down somewhere in a triangle stretching nearly 1,500 miles long and about 500 miles wide at its base. This fateful triangle includes nearly a million square miles and hundreds of unexplored islands, and only a small part of it has ever been searched for the missing pair.

Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan took off from Lae on the evening of July 1, Pacific Standard Time. The first 900 miles of their flight took them over sea and islands fairly well known, where they could take bearings without difficulty. Shortly

after midnight, they reported they were 785 miles out, and directly on course. Although regular broadcasts were heard from the plane hours later, this was the last position definitely reported, and our triangle starts from the 900 mile mark, for these reasons.

The last 1950 miles of the flight were the most difficult. There were no more land marks to aid in navigation, and the slightest drift off course would take them miles from their destination.

Stationed at Howland Island to aid in the flight was the Coast Guard "Itasca", to keep in radio contact with the ship and to advise on weather. Miss Earhart's radio could transmit on two wave lengths, 3105 kilycycles and 6210 kilocycles. There was only one thing wrong with the arrangements, and this mistake may be blamed, perhaps, for the disaster.

Although the "Itasca" had a radio direction finder which would show the source of signals it received, and thus make it possible to give bearings to a lost plane, the direction finder would not work on the Earhart wave lengths.

Miss Earhart, in the last desperate hours of her flight, asked the "Itasca" again and again to give her a report on her position. Evidently she did not know the "Itasca" was not equipped with a direction finder which could aid her.

An ironic comment can be made here of the flight preparations at Lae. During the earlier part of her trip, Miss Earhart's plane was equipped with a "trailing antennae". This wire, trailing under the ship, made it possible for the plane to broadcast on the regular ship wave length of 500 meters. With the trailing antennae, she could have transmitted signals on that wave length, and the "Itasca" direction finder, tuned to this frequency, could have reported her position in the air, But, perhaps to save weight, Miss Earhart left the trailing antennae at Lae. Thus she cancelled, irrevocably, her chance to learn from the "Itasca" or other ships where she was, lost in the skies seeking tiny Howland Island. The "Itasca" direction finder could not help her.

At 6:15 in the morning after her takeoff, Miss Earhart broadcast "cloudy weather", and again, an hour later, she told the "Itasca" that it was "overcast", and asked the cutter to signal her on the hour and half hour.

More than an hour later, at 6:42 a.m., the Earhart plane indicated for the first time that it might be off course, and made its first futile plea for aid in locating its position. The plane asked: "Want bearings on 3105 ko on the hour. Will whistle into the microphone."

Half an hour passed, and Miss Earhart again asked: "Please take a bearing on us and report in half an hour. I will make noise into the microphone. About 100 miles out." Miss Earhart apparently thought that she was 100 miles from Howland Island.

The "Itasca" could not give her any bearing, because its direction finder would not work on her wave length.

An hour later, at 10:15 a.m., Miss Earhart said: "We must be on you, but cannot see you. Gas is running low. Have been unable to reach you by radio. We are flying at 1000 feet."

This was a little more than 15 hours after the takeoff. The ship carried 1,150 gallons of gas, enough for about 17 hours in the air under normal conditions. Perhaps the plane had encountered heavier weather, earlier, or in just bucking the headwinds had used more gas than anticipated. At any rate, Miss Earhart must have flown about 1,500 miles from the point of her last known position, when she first said her gas was running low.

This distance, with perfect navigation, should have taken her to Howland, and that without doubt is the reason she said: "We must be on you." If the plane had hit its mark, why could she not see the island or the "Itasca", with a clear sky and unlimited visibility? Even a smoke screen laid down by the cutter to help guide her evidently escaped her view. It is improbable that she was where she thought she was, near Howland.

Although Miss Earhart reported at 11:12 a.m. that she had fuel left for another half hour in the air, the contact was poor and no land fall position was heard.

Fifteen minutes later she said: "We are circling but cannot see island. Cannot hear you." and asked for aid in getting her bearings. This plea she repeated five minutes later.

It will be recalled that at 11:12 a.m. Miss Earhart said she had only a half-hour's fuel left, but an hour later, at 12:14, she called the "Itasca" to report: "We are in line of position 157 dash 337. Will repeat this message on 6210 ko. We are running North and South."

Unfortunately, the position she gave had no meaning for those on the cutter or elsewhere, because it failed to give the all-important reference point for computing her bearing. What the figures meant, and why they were incomplete, can only be guessed.

An important point that should be noted is that the plane direction finder evidently was not working as well as it should, for she could not cut in on the agreed frequencies. Another fact that is perhaps of significance is that when Miss Earhart reported half-hour fuel - the "Itasca" estimated that she should have about four hours fuel supply. It is probable that she barely had gas enough to reach Howland, although she thought she was there at 11:20 a.m. when she circled trying to pick up land.

The 12:15 message was the last heard from the plane in the air. It was next heard shortly before 11:00 p.m. of the same day, in Los Angeles, long after the plane must have been down.

The reader will note that nearly 11 hours elapsed between the time the plane, still in the air, was last heard by the "Itasca", and its signals were again heard, in Los Angeles. Two factors are involved which probably explain this lapse.

First is the fact that radio short waves go up, at an angle, until they reach what is called the Heavyside layer of ionized air, in the stratosphere, then bounce back to earth, many miles from the point where they originated. There may be a dead spot inbetween, where the signals may not be heard. This is called "skip distance", in radio circles, and it accounts for the fact that a close by receiver may not hear signals which are received clearly a thousand miles or more away.

Broadcasting from land, the Earhart plane might not have been received by the "Itasca", in the vicinity, while the messages were picked up thousands of miles away. This effect of "skip distance" did occur, as will be shown later, and the "Itasca" had to rely on distant receivers to get any messages from the plane when it was down.

Another factor is that it is useless in Los Angeles to try to tune in during the daytime on signals, west or southwest of the Hawaiian Islands. Signals from this part of the world can only be heard at certain times.

When they learned that the Earhart plane was overdue, Lockheed Aircraft telephoned Walter McMenamy, her radio expert who had picked up her signals before when others could not get them, and asked that he listen. That night, McMenamy and Karl Pierson, radio amateur operator, manufacturer and nationally known short wave expert, began a vigil which lasted nearly a week, and which was rewarded by reception of signals which McMenamy positively identified as being from the Earhart plane.

McMenamy was thoroughly familiar with Miss Earhart's voice. He knew it perfectly, could detect it when others heard but a jumble of sound. This was proved during earlier flights. His familiarity with the Earhart voice began in January, 1935, when Miss Earhart made her solo flight to the mainland. During this flight, McMenamy was the only radio receiver in constant touch with her ship, working with station KFI in Los Angeles which was broadcasting to her plane. His work on this flight brought warm and written recognition from both the station and Miss Earhart. His set, built for experimentation in a laboratory, was the only one which reported her position through this flight, bringing in the signals when the equipment of the station itself could not do so.

Shortly after 11:00 p.m., July 2, McMenamy and Pierson picked up a weak signal on Miss Earhart's frequency, 6210 ko, but it was not strong enough to be understood. On another set in the room, tuned to her other frequency, 3105 ko, the listeners shortly thereafter heard two distinctly different signals, one from the "Itasca" and the other from the plane. Evidently the "Itasca" could not hear the plane, but two different stations definitely were transmitting on that wavelength at that time.

Early on the morning of July 3, McMenamy and Pierson heard a distress signal on one of the Earhart frequencies, and McMenamy positively states that he could identify the signals as from the plane, although they were poorly sent.

Radio short wave listeners learn to detect from the sound of a transmitter the approximate location of its source. This characteristic sound is called the "carrier". The swell and fade of the carrier becomes as familiar as a voice to the operator.

Being well acquainted with the characteristic noise of Miss Earhart's transmitter, which he helped to install, McMenamy can state with authority that the signals heard on her wavelength came from her plane.

The three operators present state that this first SOS message was repeated over and over again for about five minutes.

Further distress calls and garbled attempts to give position were received until about 9:00 a.m. Some of these signals were sufficiently strong to be heard on the loud speaker.

The morning of July 3 a British Cruiser "HMS Achilles" reported the following message: "At 11:30 a.m. we heard an unknown station make a report as follows: 'Please give us a few dashes if you get us.' This was heard on 3105 ko. (Miss Earhart's frequency.) The station then reported KHAQQ twice, then disappeared. Nothing more was heard from it." This was the Earhart frequency and her call letters, heard by a British ship in the Pacific many hours after she undoubtedly was down somewhere.

Nothing further was heard until the following day, July 4, two days after the plane disappeared. Then station KGMB in Honolulu made a broadcast to the effect that if Miss Earhart heard the message she was to send three long dashes if on land, and four long dashes if on water. It was apparently not known to the station that she could not broadcast from water.

In response to the broadcast, long dashes and a strong carrier on the Earhart frequency, 3105, was reported.

At about this same time the Government "Monitor" station in San Francisco, which is Uncle Sam's listening post for air communication, reported hearing a strong carrier on the other Earhart frequency, and this was heard on three receivers with directional beam antenna which indicated a position west of the Pacific Coast.

The "Monitor" station reported shortly before midnight hearing the cutter "Itasca" calling the Earhart plane, asking the plane to answer. Shortly after, a carrier was heard on the Earhart frequency, and this was reported at approximately 15 to 20 minutes past each hour until 9:05 o'clock the following morning.

The morning of July 5, McMenamy and Pierson and other operators they had called in, picked up the Earhart signals once more, the first they had received in two days. They reported hearing the "Itasca" calling the Earhart plane and also definite answering signals undoubtedly from the plane. The last of these signals from the plane ended in a decided sputtering. The sputtering at the end of this series of messages is interpreted by McMenamy as meaning that the batteries of the plane were nearly exhausted. When a little later the "Itasca" again asked to send dashes, no answering signal was heard.

At 6:17 this same morning, July 5, the San Francisco "Monitor" station heard the cutter calling "KHAQQ", the Earhart plane, requesting dashes, and shortly afterward a carrier and a man's voice were heard on the Earhart frequency. The voice was indistinguishable save for one word "one". This word was distinguished at the end of a transmission two minutes in length. The Press Wireless also reported hearing signals, which could not be identified, on the Earhart frequency.

Howland Island, likewise, reported hearing "KHAQQ" that morning, at 10:43 a.m., the portion of the message that was heard indicating a bearing of two eight one, with no reference point and therefore of no help.

Pan American Airways also, on this morning, reported hearing the plane signal, with a readio bearing of 155 degrees from Wake Island.

The next reported radio reception was by Louis Messier, a cooperating operator, in Los Angeles, the following morning, July 6, at 3:30 a.m., a weak, unidentified code signal, sent very slowly on the Earhart plane frequency, and edning with a pronounced "ripple". This message was logged as follows: "17 na u 61 4 southwes 1 23 sou owl 23 ja so not nx call equen 170 sou sec will sou nant now sou."

While no one understands this jargon, it is important because it might have been Miss Earhart trying to give her position, even though it was quite probable she did not know where she was.

The next morning, McMenamy and Pierson heard their last sounds from the Earhart frequency, a rippling carrier at 1:22 a.m. This same effect was reported heard from 9:17 to 10:37 p.m. the same day, by amateur stations in Honolulu.

These details of the radio reports are given because they prove beyond a doubt that the Earhart plane broadcast during four or five days after it was down. The signals were heard in various parts of the western hemisphere by several stations. Even assuming that one operator might have imagined the signals, it is too much to believe that all did, including Government and ship operators.

The layman might ask if it is not possible that the signals were a cruel hoax by some criminally insane operator. This possibility is ruled out definitely by the fact that there was no other transmitter in that part of the world which could have sent the signals.

Conclusive proof, thus exists that the Earhart plane landed safely, or at least that its occupants and its radio apparatus were unharmed, somewhere on land in the South Pacific.

If on an island, where, and why were they not found?

It has been pointed out before that there are hundreds of islands in the area where the plane might have come down. The two principal groups near Howland Island are the Gilbert and Phoenix groups. The cutters "Itasca" and "Swan" spent not quite two days, they reported, searching the Gilbert group. But the group contains 18 islands, shown on the map, and perhaps others, strewn along a distance of more than 400 miles. How could cutters, travelling at about 12 knots an hous, adequately search all the islands of this group, 800 miles up and down their length, in two days? They could steam about the length of the islands and back, in that time, without stoppings.

An unproductive search by air was also made, under circumstances which rendered a complete investigation impossible, of the Phoenix group, 200 miles south and east of Howland, and about 360 miles long ny 180 miles wide and containing 10 charted islands in its 65,000 square miles.

The Ellice Islands, about 600 miles southwest of Howland, were not searched at all, nor were hundreds of other islands in the vicinity and back over the course to Lae.

It was also reported that inhabitants were interviewed, on the two or three islands of the Gilbert group where humans live, and they reported no knowledge of the plane. This, again, is no proof; who has seen or heard an airplane for more than 20 or 30 miles. Many islands in the group are hundreds of miles from the nearest humans.

There are two schools of thought about the disappearance of the Earhart plane. Both cannot be right. One is that the plane was lost at sea. The other is represented by this memorandum. As to the first, is it not perfectly natural that even those closest and among the most dear to the missing flier and her navigator, with the evidence of the Navy search of the sea close to Howland Island, would prefer to think that the flight had come to a definite end - to avoid the life-long torture of a question in their minds? The facts as related here tend to intrude such a question. No comfort, then, could come from the facts, and the mind would seek to shut them out, in favor of the peace that comes from resignation.

In an effort to reconstruct what might have happened, let us review the possibilities. We know that the Earhart plane was lost. Its navigation had gone wrong. It is likely, even, that it was hundreds of miles from the sea area around Howland which the Navy searched, and from the Gilbert group.

With little gas left and after circling the area beneath them, what would experienced fliers do? No doubt, they had passed many islands on the course behind them. Any pilot, under the circumstances, probably would have gone back to one of them and landed, relying on their radio and on searching parties for rescue.

That rescue never came because no adequate search has ever been made.

Palmer Bevis

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New York, N. Y.

February 3, 1940