

MadCow Morning News*investigative reporting into drug trafficking, 9/11, and state-sponsored crime***DANGEROUS BLACK ICE**Posted on February 6, 2014 by [Daniel Hopsicker](#)[Share via email](#) [Share](#)

News that [a DEA affidavit implicated](#) Fort Lauderdale aviation impresario Don Whittington for brokering the now-famous Gulfstream II jet that crashed with 4 tons of cocaine in the Yucatan to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) black operation in Tampa came as a complete surprise, even to those closely following the case.

But in hindsight it makes a certain sense. The Whittington's have long been among South Florida's most storied 'pirates.'

And the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport is to American general aviation what Sodom and Gomorrah were to the Bible.



The new information in the DEA affidavit was the first movement in the case in six years, almost since the moment the American-registered plane from St Petersburg FL burst open on impact, spilling four tons of cocaine across an area the size of three football fields.

[Don Whittington brokered the sale](#) of the Gulfstream (N987SA) jet to the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency in Tampa, the DEA document disclosed, as part of an operation called Operation Mayan Jaguar.

It was a controversial operation. A top DEA official in Miami called it a "rogue operation." On the evidence of recent court filings in Miami in a related case (profiled in an upcoming story), the U.S. Asst Attorney in Miami who is charged with handling all major drug trafficking cases in South Florida appears to concur.

An inter-Agency tug-of-war is underway; the kind of imbroglio during which some truth may slip out.

Font Size: +

Do not ask for whom the cell phone rings.

The case of the Gulfstream has sat dead in the water— with no Americans ever charged, even though it was an American-registered plane—for more than six years.

In Mexico, however, it was a whole different story:

Three tortured bodies associated with the case were found lying across a road near the Merida airport. A dozen Federal agents in Cancun went to prison. Four airport policemen served time. One pilot committed suicide while serving his sentence.



And the Director of Civil Aviation in the Yucatan, [Jose Luis Soladana Ortiz, was assassinated](#). Soladana had been in direct radio contact with the pilots on the Gulfstream as it approached Cancun Airport, where local observers stated it had landed without incident on numerous occasions.



This time, however, Soladana denied the plane permission to land. The Gulfstream flew on into the night. Hours later when it ran out of fuel the plane made an emergency crash-landing in the jungle near Tixkobob, a hamlet 50 miles from Merida.

Soladana Ortiz paid for his decision with his life. His body was found on the side of the road, face down, holding his cell phone with both hands in front of his chest. As authorities examined it his phone began ringing, eerily, repeatedly. His killers, still nearby, were mocking investigators.

Hapless pilots with empty pockets set up to take the heat

That the Gulfstream hadn't belonged to a hastily set-up company called Donna Blue Associates, owned by two Brazilians, became obvious when, less than two weeks after the crash, I paid a visit to the address in Coconut Beach FL. that "Donna Blue Aircraft Inc" listed as its place of business on FAA documents.

What I found was an empty office suite with a blank sign out front. There was no sign of Donna Blue Aircraft. However, there were a half-dozen unmarked police cars parked directly in front of the empty suite.



Nor was it owned by the two hapless pilots in Fort Lauderdale who were set up as patsy's by the Brazilians, who swore they'd sold the Gulfstream to them for \$2 million in cash a week before it went down. It was clear in interviews with aviation executives that—unless the back end of a Brinks truck suddenly fell open in front of them—neither pilot could have raised enough to pay for more than one beer with lunch



No sign outside. Nobody home.

It already seemed clear ("[Sloppy Tradecraft Exposes CIA Drug Plane](#)") that the plane had been owned by an Agency of the U.S. Government. During the course of reporting on drug trafficking for more than a decade I had become familiar with how the CIA hides or sheep-dips the ownership of its fleet of planes.

Gaming the System 101

During the following months I identified [a motley crew of politically well-connected](#) 'straw' owners in whose hands the plane had been temporarily



“parked” or “sheep-dipped” during the previous decade. These stories will become highly relevant when Tampa ICE is forced to admit, as it will be, that the Agency was also behind the operation of [the DC-9 \(N900SA\) from St Petersburg](#) that was seized carrying 5.5 tons of cocaine eighteen months before the crash of the Gulfstream II.

Bill and Don Whittington’s World Jet in Fort Lauderdale allegedly ran a scheme designed to shield drug planes from official suspicion by providing planes with American registration to drug cartels, according to the DEA affidavit.

“They negotiate a contract with the representative of a DTO (drug trafficking organization) to lease an aircraft to the DTO requiring a large amount of money down, often more than the plane is worth. In return, Whittington maintains the aircraft and the American registration number.

“After an unspecified amount of time the plane is repossessed. If its seized in a bust, both parties deny responsibility and world jet can reclaim the plane because it holds the financial lien.”

Meaning even if the drug plane was caught, World Jet could obfuscate its true ownership, and often be able to keep it from being seized by the government. In short, the “boys” at World Jet— like Wall Street’s parasitic elite before the 2008 crash of the global economy—had been gaming the system.

[The CIA has used](#) the same scheme for years.

The history of a single plane tells us a story

Citing seven different confidential informants, [the 35-page DEA affidavit](#) accused the Whittington’s of running a scheme that sold at least 12 planes to drug traffickers from Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, and even Africa.



The story of just one of those planes—a Hawker 700 (N49RJ)—which the DEA affidavit alleges that World Jet eventually sold to drug traffickers, offers an inside look at 30 years of drug trafficking in South Florida.

There are astonishing disclosures and eye-popping revelations to make even a jaded observer shudder to be found on virtually every page in the DEA document.

While owned by the Whittington’s, the Hawker 700 luxury business jet carrying tail number N49RJ had a colorful history. One particular highlight(or lowlight) occurred in 2005.



Font Size: +

A terrorist, sure. But our terrorist.

Font Size: +

At the same time World Jet's planes were flying suspected terrorists to prisons around the world, a man who had been convicted of terrorism— [Cuban exile Juan Posada Carriles](#), convicted of the murder of 78 innocent passengers killed on a Cuban airliner in 1976—[was flying on N49RJ](#) under more genteel circumstances.

[Posada led an operation](#) which planted a bomb on a Cubana airliner. When it reached an altitude of 18,000 feet, two bombs exploded simultaneously. As the plane went down, the pilots tried to return to the airport. They radioed the control tower: "We have an explosion aboard, we are descending immediately! ... We have fire on board! We are requesting immediate landing! We have a total emergency!"



Realizing a successful landing was no longer possible, the pilot turned away from the beach and towards the Caribbean Sea, saving the lives of many tourists. At the time it was the deadliest terrorist airline attack in the Western Hemisphere. All 78 people on board were killed.

Moreover it was just [one in a number of bomb attacks](#) that were part of a violent terrorist campaign waged against Caribbean countries which had begun to establish links with Cuba, a campaign that included the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C. later that year.

**No shackles.No hoodie. No anal suppository.**

Posada Carriles flew [an airline charter on World Jet's luxury Hawker 700](#), N49RJ between Fort Lauderdale and El Paso where he was on trial in U.S. Court for perjury, as the US Government attempted to deport him from the U.S.

Yet unlike the suspected terrorists flown on World Jet's extraordinary renditions for the CIA—who had as yet been convicted of nothing—Posada, who *had*, was not made to wear a hood and shackles. Nor is there any record of his having had a suppository thrust up his anus for the duration of the flight.

What explains the difference in treatment? Posada Carriles lack of shackles may have been because of his age—he was approaching 80 at the time—but was also almost certainly affected by his status as [a paid CIA operative](#) since before the Kennedy assassination.

In court document, Posada Carriles lawyers said Alberto "Al" Herreros, the plane's owner, was paying for the charter.



[Alberto Herreros](#), the man reportedly paying for Luis Posada Carriles' charter flight to El Paso, is the former president of Vortex/Universal, cited in the "Kerry Report" on Iran Contra as one of six companies "owned and operated by convicted or suspected drug traffickers that were linked to the Contras."

Herreros' vice president was Michael Palmer, a drug pilot who emerged into the glare of Congressional hearings along with his partner Frank Moss, at the Charlotte County Airport. Both men were listed in the diary of Rob Owen, Oliver North's aide.

While Vortex was being paid by the State Dept. to fly so-called humanitarian assistance



to the contras, the firm's vice president Michael Palmer was under indictment for marijuana trafficking. Palmer later confessed to have brought 120,000 pounds of marijuana into the U.S.

[The CIA Inspector General's report](#) on Iran contra later confirmed the allegation. It was totally clear, to anyone bothering to look, that the contras had close dealings with drug smugglers, who operated out of remote airfields where they knew that U.S. authorities were intentionally looking the other way.

How the CIA sheep-dips its fleet of planes

[world-jet](#)

In the FAA records of the Hawker 700, something unusual is visible almost immediately.

The plane's registration changes hands four times between 2000 and 2009,. Yet it remains at all times under the control of Don Whittington.

The plane's FAA registration shows that [World Jet sold it to Mountain Aviation LLC](#) of Cheyenne Wyoming in August 2000.

Mountain Aviation [then sold it back to World Jet](#) on the 22nd of May 2002.

Then [R.D. \(Don\) Whittington, as an individual](#), apparently not bothering to change the plane's registration from his company's name to his own first, sold it to Hawker Jet 400, of Wilmington, in October 2007.

Hawker Jet 400 of Wilmington Delaware is another Whittington-controlled company, as can be seen in a registration form signed by its chief executive (R.D. (Don) Whittington) when it is sold back to Mountain Aviation in Cheyenne in February of 2009.

Three corporate entities swapped the plane back and forth. It went from World Jet in Fort Lauderdale to Mountain Aviation in Cheyenne Wyoming, to Hawker Jet 400 in Wilmington Delaware, and then back to Mountain Aviation in Cheyenne.

Yet all three were controlled by Don Whittington.

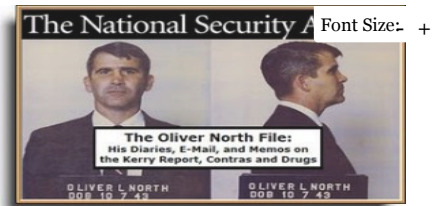
The change of registration to Mountain Aviation is signed by [Mountain Aviation executive Steven J Halmos](#), whose name will become significant shortly. But both the DEA affidavit, which asserts Mountain Aviation is controlled by Whittington, and [a 2009 filing by Mountain Aviation to the FAA](#) on the plane, signed by Tammy Whitmier, Whittington's long-time assistant and bookkeeper, make it clear that Mountain Aviation is a Whittington-controlled company.

The point of all the changes is to game the FAA's antiquated registration system to introduce uncertainty. The benefits of this strategy became immediately clear when the American-registered Gulfstream went down in the Yucatan.

Investigating the covert activities of U.S. spy agencies—and many of the actions of the Whittington Brothers at World Jet fall within any reasonable definition of "U.S. covert activities"—leads into thickets which are overrun with the names of dummy front companies—called Donna Blue Aircraft, Southern Air Transport, or Hawker 400—whose true purpose is to sow confusion and hide the identities of those involved.

Beyond Human Ken

The result of these efforts—absent persistent and skeptical inquiry in the major media, which is always utterly lacking—is to make it appear as if Mankind's knowledge of the ownership of luxury jets that "just happen" to get busted carrying multi-ton loads of cocaine is



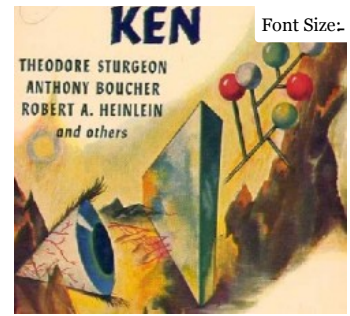
governed—like our understanding of the movement of subatomic quarks—by the equivalent of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle.

The more influential the listed owner of a busted American-registered drug plane, the more uncertain the identification. The Associated Press headline about the Gulfstream, **“How the U.S.-registered Gulfstream ended up in the hands of suspected drug traffickers remains a mystery,”** clearly suggests answers may lie beyond human ken.

The Associated Press' lack of any follow-up clearing up the mystery speaks volumes.

The answers are blowing (like tumbleweeds) in the wind

The answers don't lie beyond human ken. They lie in the Arizona desert, 90 miles southeast of Phoenix, at a remote former CIA airbase that shimmers in the heat amid an otherwise unbroken vista of cactus and tumbleweed.



Font Size: +



The CIA's "former" airbase at Marana, Arizona holds the key to the mystery of how the Agency hides, or “sheep-dips,” its planes. When the base was privatized, top CIA aviation officers, including the Agency’s legendary George Doole, went to work there for Evergreen International.



The CIA’s far-flung aviation operations, which span the globe, continue to be run from there. Thousands of airplanes sit parked, waiting to be reactivated. Inside the largest hanger hangs a plaque dedicated to George Doole, who for decades was in charge of CIA’s aviation activities worldwide. Doole created and ran the worlds’ largest airline. They called it “Spook Air.”

He was so adept at the sleight of hand necessary to shuffle the ‘paper’ ownership of the CIA’s fleet of planes back and forth between a bewildering number of proprietary airlines that the true size of the CIA’s airline—then and now—will never be known.

When Richard Nixon appointed Richard Helms CIA Director in the early 70’s, Helms tasked a staffer with adding up and accounting for all the planes in Doole's domain. After three months on the project the staffer gave up in exasperation.

The problem, he explained to Helms, was the speed and alacrity with which Doole changed airplane markings and tail numbers, and leased planes back and forth between various shell corporations.

Then came Watergate. In the aftermath of revelations about the CIA’s assassination and mind control programs, the Agency was under strong pressure to sell off the front companies used to hide their fleet of planes.



Font Size: +

The subsequent privatization of government assets into private hands had the same result as it did in Russia 15 years later. The aviation wing of crony capitalism was born.

They should have called it "Comrade Air."

Soon retired Generals, like Richard Secord, became instant corporate CEO's, running aircraft charter and aviation companies that continued doing the CIA's bidding.



Today the tradition continues, with companies like World Jet and Donna Blue Aircraft replacing more familiar names like Air America, Southern Air, and Evergreen Airlines.

According to FAA registration records, this is where the Gulfstream's sister airplane, SkyWay's DC-9 (N900SA)—busted with 5.5 tons of cocaine in the Yucatan—came from. The plane was brought out of mothballs in 2002 to be put to work in the war on terror.

It was also from here, in the late 80's—while SkyWay Chairman Glenn Kovar still worked for the U.S. Forest Service—that that innocuous Federal Agency—the home of Smokey the Bear!—was "gifted" with dozens of "surplus" military cargo airplanes.

The planes, to be used to fight fires in U.S. national parks, began turning up being used as cargo workhorses for Mexican and South American drug cartels, including, memorably, one C-130 that was found sitting on a runway at Mexico City's international airport carrying a stunning billion dollars worth of cocaine.



And this was in the late 1980's, when a billion dollars worth of cocaine was still worth...well, a billion dollars.

SUNDAY: The story of a single one of the DEA's "Magic 13" World Jet planes is just getting started.

Share via email Share

Those of you who read the stories published here know their value better than I can describe.

The investigative reporting on the impact of drug money on US political life and our economy found here are taboo subjects in the mainstream media. Without your help the effort cannot continue.

[Order our books and documentaries](#), and donate what you can!



**About Daniel Hopsicker**

Daniel Hopsicker is an investigative journalist dubious about the self-serving assertion of U.S. officials that there are no American Drug Lords.

[View all posts by Daniel Hopsicker →](#)

Font Size: +

This entry was posted in [News](#), [Uncategorized](#) and tagged [5.5 tons of cocaine](#), [American drug lord](#), [CIA](#), [cocaine](#), [Don Whittington](#), [Flort Lauderdale](#), [Gulfstream II](#), [Mountain Aviation](#), [N49RJ](#), [sheep-dip](#), [tons of cocaine](#), [World Jet](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

[Anonymous](#) says:

February 18, 2014 at 5:12 pm

Extremely good article. When are you going to write about Manta US Base in Ecuador?

How can I get in touch with you via e-mail? Thanks for your investigations; it is helping so many people knowing the real business behind drug trafficking in the world.

[Anonymous](#) says:

February 7, 2014 at 9:41 pm

Thanks for the interesting article! Seems Evergreen Air is a lot into transporting chemical stuff. <http://www.infowars.com/evergreen-air-and-a-secret-chemtrail-facility/>

MadCow Morning News

Proudly powered by WordPress.