Hostages fine as FBI nabs teen-age hijacker

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A teen-ager who brandished a knife and demanded to go to Iran hijacked a jet landing at El Paso with 71 people aboard Saturday, the FBI said. After about 3½ hours on the ground, he was taken into custody and the last passengers were freed.

No shots were fired, and no injuries were reported in the incident aboard the American Airlines Boeing 727.

The man was identified as Gerald James Hill Jr. 18, of Chester, Mass., according to FBI Special Agent Roger Terrazas. Hill, wearing blue jeans, a plaid shirt and tennis shoes, was arraigned Saturday afternoon before U.S. District Judge William S. Sessions, who set bond at $500,000. Hill was being held at the El Paso county jail.

The federal complaint against Hill alleged that he interfered with the flight attendants and crew members by assaulting, intimidating or threatening them with a "large knife" and with threats to dynamite the plane.

Sessions said the charge carries a maximum sentence of life in prison because a deadly weapon was involved.

In the complaint, FBI agents said Hill was armed with a "large knife" that he held 2 inches from a flight attendant. At one time during negotiations, he told officers that he had a stick of very old dynamite which he could blow up very easily and that "it would make a big hole in the airplane."

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FBI agents later said Hill, who told them he is a former paratrooper who served at Ft. Benning, Ga., did not have any dynamite in his possession.

A Ft. Benning spokesman said Hill was released from the service during infantry training because "he couldn't adjust to the military."

"I don't know anything about the paratrooper business he talked about," said Staff Sgt. David Bristow.

Sessions said he would appoint a lawyer for Hill on Saturday, but he also scheduled another hearing Monday morning to further discuss appointment of counsel.

Hill was interrogated at the federal building in El Paso, but gave officials no reason for his demand to travel to Iran.

Hill allegedly used the knife to take control of American flight 395 from San Antonio to Los Angeles as it landed on schedule at El Paso International Airport. Terrazas said Hill had allowed all but "about 20" male passengers to leave as soon as the jet landed.

Before the FBI announced that Hill had been subdued, a group of persons could be seen leaving the plane through a rear door. Shortly after, armed officers boarded the plane.

Jeff Huppert, 32, of San Diego, one of the passengers forced to stay on the plane, said Hill appeared nervous when he first got on the plane "...but once he was in control, he seemed real calm and organized about the whole thing."

"I was scared to death," said Irene Smallridge, 72, of Huntington, W.Va., one of the passengers in the first group to leave the plane.

During the standoff, four Special Weapons and Tactics police officers could be seen close to the plane with M-16 rifles and high-powered rifles with scopes.

American spokesman John Raymond said he was told the captain was allowed off the plane to file a flight plan for Iran. But Raymond said the jet was an extended body, or "stretch" 727, which does not have transoceanic range.

Cockpit radio conversations monitored at the airport indicated the hijacker repeatedly plunged what Terrazas described as a "6-inch, Bowie-type" knife into a bulkhead, apparently in frustration or rage.

The radio discussions mentioned the knife and a quarter-stick of dynamite. One conversation said the hijacker might have indicated he would let all but one of the passengers off the aircraft.

El Paso Mayor Thomas Westfall said he had offered to exchange himself for the hostages, but it was not known if the offer was made directly to the hijacker.

Ruth Ash of El Paso was allowed to leave the plane, but her husband, Lou remained on board until the end. The couple was returning from a holiday visit with relatives in San Antonio, she said.

"As the plane was taxiing to the gate, a young, clean-cut man hurried up the aisle," Mrs. Ash said. "My husband and I remarked he must have a tight schedule, or maybe has a girlfriend to meet. I didn't think anything of it until we saw him ... come around the corner by the deplaning door, and I saw a knife."

She said her husband gave her car keys and a key to their house as she left. "But I'm staying here until he gets off," she said.

Mrs. Smallridge said, "All I know is that someone run through, and they told the passengers to sit down, and they told the women and the children to get off and the men to come to the front of the plane."

Widow's gift doubles value

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP) — A widow's $20 million bequest to Santa Barbara has more than doubled in value during two years of legal haggling and detective work that established her Italian lover's claim to a $5 million share.

Alice Keck Park, who went to school in Santa Barbara as a girl, left her entire estate to four local institutions when she died at age 59 in June 1977. The gift now totals between $40 million and $50 million, since much of it was in Superior Oil Co. stock, whose market price has been pushed higher because of oil-shortage scares.

By month's end, about $23.38 million in cash and Superior Oil stock will be distributed among the Santa Barbara Humane Society, Cottage Hospital, the museum of art and the botanical garden. An additional $20 million is expected to be distributed in a few months from the rest of the estate, once the legal process is completed.

Mrs. Park was the daughter of William Myron Keck of Pasadena, founder of Superior Oil. She attended private school in Santa Barbara, and married David Edgar Park at age 35. After three years of marriage he died in 1956. They had no children.

Mrs. Park began to travel and, according to court files, a physical education teacher from northern Italy, Bruno Valentino Silvio Leonarduzzi, entered her life in 1962.

By February 1968, Mrs. Park began talking of marriage, Leonarduzzi said in an affidavit. He said she mentioned that in Colorado a legal common-law marriage is possible if two people simply live together. She said it would "allow us to get married without publicity — one of the things that she hated more than anything else in the world," he told attorneys.

They lived in Aspen and Glenwood Springs, Colo., from 1970 to 1973, when they returned to Italy. But on Dec. 4, 1973, Mrs. Park flew back to the United States and never saw Leonarduzzi again. He says it would not be honorable to talk about what broke them up.

Mrs. Park died in Tucson, Ariz., on June 24, 1977.

She had made no mention of Leonarduzzi when she wrote her will in Switzerland in 1967, even though they were together.

But the settlement of the estate became clouded in mystery when a telegram dated Dec. 5, 1977, arrived in Santa Barbara. Its message, translated from Italian: "Happy Saint Barbara's Day. Thinking of you always." It was addressed to Alice Leonarduzzi.

Under the law, an executor has the duty to find and notify anyone who might have a claim on an estate. Since Leonarduzzi seemed to regard himself as Mrs. Park's husband, the matter posed serious problems for the institutions expecting the bonanza from the estate.

Rental rates driven up by shortages

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans who can't afford to buy houses are facing a shortage of available apartments, and that in turn is driving up rental rates, a New Jersey senator says.

"Either we step up our efforts to maintain an adequate supply of rental housing or else we face a situation in which rental housing costs will skyrocket under the pressure of unmet demand, further fueling the fires of inflation," said Sen. Harrison Williams, D-N.J.

In a statement released Saturday, Williams said his Housing and Urban Affairs Subcommittee would schedule hearings in search of "workable responses that will turn this situation around."

Williams said he based his comments on the "devastating conclusions" of a new General Accounting Office study.

The study shows rental vacancies are virtually nonexistent in some parts of the nation; rent hikes are racing 42 percent ahead of renters' income increases; 40 percent of occupied rental units are 30 or more years old; and condominium conversions are further depleting rental stock.

Worst hit are America's poor, "whose housing choices are always the most limited," Williams said.

"Under present economic conditions, the private sector is simply unable to produce necessary housing for persons with modest incomes, and federal housing programs are insufficiently funded to fill the gap."

Possible ways to fight the problem include incentives to encourage private construction, expanded federal help under public housing programs and efforts to fix up existing public housing stock, "much of which stands vacant because of inadequate maintenance and repair," Williams said.

Aging and deteriorating rental property also was the subject of a separate report issued this weekend by a House Government Operations subcommittee.

The report recommends that the Department of Housing and Urban Development put more emphasis on programs to conserve existing private apartment buildings and link those programs to one already offering subsidized mortgage money for new construction or substantial rehabilitation.

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Sliced Cold Cuts 8-oz. pkg. 79¢
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Beef Franks 1-lb. pkg. 1.99
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Beefeater Franks 1-lb. pkg. 1.49

Whole Beef Brisket 1.59 lb.
Cooked, Wrapped 7-lb. Avg.
Italian Style Sausage 1.49 lb.
Chicken Wings 69¢ lb.
Longacre
Chicken Franks 1-lb. pkg. 99¢
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Any Variety Sliced
Smoked Meats 2-oz. pkg. 59¢
U.S.D.A. Choice Beef Chuck
Boneless Pot Roast 1.89 lb.
U.S.D.A. Choice Beef, Cut from the Chuck Filet, Top Chuck, Cubed or Sandwich
Boneless Steaks 2.19 lb.
Genuine Spring New Zealand Whole Frozen Oven Ready 5-7-lb. Avg.
Legs of Lamb 1.79 lb.
Pork Shoulder, Water Added
Smoked Butts 1.49 lb.

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Domestic Sliced
Natural Meunster 8-oz. pkg. 85¢

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Snapper Fillet lb. 2.49
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