

PART I
THE BASIC REASONS FOR
THE AMERICAN AIRLINES STRIKE

American Airlines issued a revised Flight Manual to all Flight Personnel dated January 1, 1954.

I. Quotes From This Manual

- A. "Strict compliance with the Regulations and Procedures, as covered in the manual, current Civil Air Regulations and all Operations Department bulletins, is required." Signed Operations Manager.
- B. "In recognition of its significance, Safety is the primary consideration of American Airlines Flight Operations. More specifically, the 3 precepts upon which we plan and conduct each flight are:

First - Safety
Second - Passenger Service and Comfort
Third - Operation on Schedule

- C. "This Flight Manual presents Civil Air Regulations, that part of the Operating Certificate covering enroute operation and airport specifications and American Airlines Regulations."
- D. "These Regulations are the Law - to be strictly adhered to by all personnel concerned." (Introduction to Manual)

II. Two Laws Included In The Flight Manual

- A. "No Pilot or Flight Engineer shall be scheduled to fly more than 8 hours in any 24 consecutive hours ..." (Part 40.320-b - Civil Air Regulations)
- B. "A flight crew member shall not be considered to be scheduled for duty in excess of prescribed limitations, if the flights to which he is assigned are scheduled and normally terminate within such limitations, but due to exigencies beyond the Company's control, such as adverse weather conditions, are not at the time of departure expected to reach their destination within the scheduled time." (Part 40.320-g - Civil Air Regulations)

Note: The exigencies described in B are only those not within the Company's control prior to departure of the flight.

III. PROBLEM

When American purchased the DC-7, the management was presented with this problem: "The airplane would fly from coast to coast nonstop, (as would many other existing types) but, on the westbound leg, it would not comply with the Law, as stated in the Company's Flight Manual. (Civil Air Regulations above)

If there were some way to circumvent this Law, the Company could: (a) Have a monopoly for awhile; (b) Inaugurate the first nonstop coast to coast service; (c) Make some money on this type of service.

There were TWO major obstacles to overcome. (a) In 1950, the pilots of ALPA voted unalterably opposed to any waiver of the flight time limitations of the Civil Air Regulations. (With certain reservations) (b) The Law ("to be strictly adhered to by all personnel concerned") prevents scheduling trips over 8 hours. (II-a II-b)

IV. The Company's Solution of The Problem

Of the many possible solutions, the following one was chosen by American management: (a) To "SAY" it will fly westbound under 8 hours; (b) To appease or mislead the Pilots in such a way as to get them to give it a trial on a "let's see basis".

V. Results of This Choice

A. To "SAY" it will fly westbound under 8 hours.

Was American sincere in their belief when they "SAID" it would fly westbound on a schedule of 7:55? (Set up November 29, 1953)

Dates - November 29, 1953 thru May 7, 1954			
<u>Days Trial</u>	161		
<u>Number of Trips</u>	202		
<u>Average Time/Trip</u>	8:52	No.	% of
<u>Total Hours Flown</u>	1,790:39	<u>Trips</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Ramp To Ramp Time Under 7:55...</u>		4	1.96%
" 7:56 to 8:35...		60	29.70
" 8:36 to 9:00...		68	33.65
" 9:01 to 9:30...		46	22.80
" 9:31 to 10:00..		18	8.91
" 10:01 to 10:30..		5	2.48
" Over 10:30..		1	0.50
	TOTAL	202	100.00%

1. The Pilots didn't believe it would fly it in that scheduled time of 7:55 when it was first announced.
2. The record after a trial of 161 days is shown above.
3. The CAA warned American after 5 months of operation that it was apparent that it would have to be rescheduled.
4. The CAA placed American under a "cease and desist" order after 6 months of operation for violating existing Civil Air Regulations. \$1,000 fine per trip was the penalty assessed.
5. American later asked for 9:00 hours schedule in the Summer months and 9:30 during the Winter months.

Conclusion

American did not act in good faith on their "paper" schedule. It appears in the face of existing evidence that this was a misleading statement to begin with. They violated their own directive in their Company Manual, that "This is the Law - to be strictly adhered to by all personnel." (A pilot violating the same set of Laws is subject to a fine and/or loss of license). (Evidently this did not apply to top management when the stakes were large).

American forced their pilots to violate one of the "sacred" rules in their Company Manual, a Civil Air Regulation, no less, under the threat of "Fly the trip or be fired". Bulletin Dated March 5, 1954 - Signed - Director of Flight.

This policy is not designed to create the most respect for the Company Manual directives in the minds of those who are supposed to work by it.

- B. To appease or mislead the Pilots in such a way as to get them to give the trip a trial on a "let's see basis".

In September 1953, this classic statement was issued by American management to the pilot group through the ALPA MEC:

Question: "What happens if we cannot fly the westbound trip in 8 hours?"

Answer: "The Company, should it find that, after a reasonable opportunity, we could not operate nonstop within flight time limits, would discontinue nonstop operations."

Be careful how you interpret this statement. It is loaded! Here is the interpretation according to its author:

"Certain of your Union leaders would have you believe that your representatives were so naive that they completely missed the implication in my statement that the Company might, if necessary, ask for modification of the 8-hour law for the nonstops. Nothing could be further from the truth. The MEC knew what I was talking about." Signed - Director of Flight.

This is undoubtedly a confidence building exercise in mind reading to aid in the interpretations of current revisions of operating manuals sent out by this same office.

It also proves that the Company did not believe their "paper" schedules. They had the answers ready.

VI. The First Step of the Solution is Now Complete

- A. The "paper" schedule postpones CAA action for awhile.
- B. The promise to the Pilots dupes them into going along on a "let's see basis".

3. The charges filed against the Company by the CAA for previous violations are not being publicized, and if all the cumulative fines were paid in full, it would be cheap in price to gain the Company's objective.

The Lesson Pilots are Evidently Supposed to Learn is This:

- A. Look for the hidden meaning in every Company move.
- B. Believe no promises or statements put out by management. They are masters of the 180 degree turn.
- C. If contracts do not state their terms in absolute legal language, they have no value. "Intentions" are only to be thrown aside.
- D. If a proposition looks logical, don't accept it. It probably has a long fuse attached.

Are we supposed to cooperate with the Company, or are we supposed to be in competition with it?

August 24, 1954

Mr. C. R. Smith:

Your staff will probably be able to prove that all the statements in Part I are false, libelous, and full of conclusions based upon erroneous facts. Be that as it may, it is sincerely one thing. It is the feeling and impression that has been created during the past few weeks of the Pilot Group for the Company management policy.

We, as a group of pilots, do not like to be so critical of management. It creates low morale, no spirit of cooperation, and everything else that is bad for a Company. The recent situation has converted many pilots to thinking, "Management is out to dupe us at every turn". This way lies madness.

Has the Company grown so large that it cannot recapture the high morale of the early years in our history?

We, as a group of individuals, each have a separate vote to determine the course of action of the ALPA. We are paid salaries commensurate with our responsibilities connected with the lives and equipment which you place in our hands. At least, you trust us that much. Are you afraid to gamble on the outcome of issues presented to us with all the facts available, and no hidden "gimmicks"? There are other companies which are run very successfully upon a basis of trust and mutual respect between management and employees. Strange as it may seem, pilots are people; at least they have the same reactions to various kinds of treatment that people have the world over. They won't stand for deceit, sly practices and double dealing. They fear the unknown factors which may trap them into an undesirable situation later on. They respect honesty, fair dealing, "the cards all on the table attitude", and the integrity of any individual with whom they are dealing. They can even think for themselves, if given the right kind of tools - unbiased facts. If they have to be on guard for "long-range planning" and "hidden meanings" it clouds the issue.

This strike has been a source of great discomfort to a lot of people. It has been an economic loss all the way around. It has created ill-feeling that will remain for years. It will be tragic if we continue on this same road without having profited from our mistakes. We are supposed to learn something from every "crash" in this business.

You have a large staff at your command. They have many skills. Isn't there any possibility that they could initiate a new idea, applying old, time-tested methods applicable to congenial human relationship? There must be some new approach that we haven't tried. Perhaps the application of straight thinking, the Golden Rule, an honest effort, and a good selling campaign would start it off.

Give us some new approaches along sound lines and see if you get the support from us that they will deserve.

Very truly yours,

183 Pilots @ Council #19

Fort Worth, Texas