

DBC FBI Cover-Up
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The FBI told TJC that his “*strong circumstantial case*” with 102 pieces of evidence against Robert W. Rackstraw Sr. was, after 45 years, “*unprosecutable*.” But former special agents, judges, attorneys and prosecutors on his Cold Case Team argued that the Bureau’s refusal happened for another reason: its fear of being shamed in a trial. Here are a dozen time-lined incidents supporting the FBI cover-up claim:

1) Rackstraw’s Grifter Identity in Northwest (7/16 to 11/23/71): A dozen credible residents from two towns – including a priest, councilman and senior firefighter – roundly recognized Robert W. Rackstraw Sr. (RWR) in old videos and photos as “Swiss Baron Norman de Winter,” a con-artist pilot who lived among them in the four months leading up to the hijack. Two said he was on their couch the day before. Old articles and grifter’s 7 pen-pal letters verify his scams and sudden vanishing. But after the Cold Case Team (CCT) turned in this development and contacts to Seattle Division on 8/24/17, **FBI took no action**.

2) Fly-Away Escape (11/23 & 11/24/71): The D.B. Cooper (DBC) getaway was witnessed by a half-dozen farmers in La Center, WA. FOIA records show they were questioned by FBI agents and, days later, by a visiting reporter. Both versions match dramatic details in a ‘97 oral escape story, which was told by one of DBC’s suspected crime-partners and brought to the CCT. A summary of all the similar accounts was forwarded to Seattle Division case agents on 8/24/17, but so far **no FBI action has been taken**.

3) Taunting “DBC” Letters #1-4 (Mailed 11-27 to 12-1-71): The four DBC notes sent to Western papers were confiscated by FBI. All feature cut-and-pasted words except letter #2, which was hand-printed. TJC noticed first and last were mailed within 50 miles of RWR’s 1971 isolated CA mountain home, 466 flying miles from OR crime scene. But **agents refused to discuss the new evidence of RWR’s home-mailing proximity to the “discounted” 4-letter theory. Bureau, however, still holds onto three of those letters**.

CCT offered up RWR’s DNA – gathered under retired agents’ supervision (in 2013 surveillance operation) and extracted by a Bureau-approved private lab – for comparison to FBI’s 4 confiscated DBC letters’ lick stamps and envelope flaps. But **Seattle Division refused to accept the DNA or look at private lab report**.

4) Taunting “DBC” Letter #5 (Mailed 12/11/71): This typed note has a tone and phrasings like the earlier four DBC letters seized by the FBI. But the Bureau treated this one as real, stamping it as “evidence” and acting on its author’s claims. **On its 10/17 FOIA release** though, there was a telling redaction: In an old management memo about the note’s value, the **FBI literally covered up its “D.B. Cooper” identifier**.

5) Seattle FBI Division vs. California FBI (1978-79): Seven years later, Seattle first learned about CA fugitive RWR and his DBC skill sets, similar looks, and admitting to have been in hijack zone at time. When agents pressed the captured local felon if he was DBC on 2/20/78, he lawyered up. Weeks later, they asked his defense rep for a palm print – one of 11 partial prints found in DBC’s seating area. But two sources say the lawyer laughed, “*Are you crazy? I’d be pretty stupid to do that!*” So **without direct evidence, Seattle Division decided to publicly play down RWR**: Seattle Times wrote on 2/3/79 that “*law enforcement sources*” claimed he’d been “*ruled out*” and “*dismissed from serious consideration*” by FBI.

That strategy angered CA G-men working the case: Next day, Senior FBI Agent Tom Kinberg told a newsman he disputed the account of RWR's clearing. He "*remains under investigation*" and "*information developed by investigators here is still being forwarded.*" Sources say Kinberg wasn't the only one there to rile Seattle Division. The agent who told A.P. wire in 1978 that he linked RWR to DBC was sent back to his remote home-state office. **FYI: CA FBI agents leaked RWR was a serious suspect to media 11 times.**

6) River's Two Money Discoveries (2/10/80): According to multiple sources, a secret cohort of RWR's, the now-deceased Dick Briggs, planted the 3 DBC money bundles in the Columbia River's surface sand in 1980. The FBI announced it "*probably*" meant DBC drowned. Soon after, Rackstraw-Cooper was freed from prison for local crimes and cleared by the FBI. But during the continuing river dig for the hijacker's bones, thousands of DBC cash "shards" were found, three feet down. The FBI shore chief held up the pieces for TV cameras, but he had no explanation. **The Bureau never spoke of them again.**

During '71 "Fly-Away Escape" (#2), the crime-partner storyteller said DBC and pilot dumped \$50K of ransom into nearby Vancouver Lake to make it look like DBC drowned. But it never surfaced – until agents dug deeper along the Columbia in '80. TJC suspects Briggs' cash bundle-planting was Rackstraw-Cooper's second drowning stunt; the original chewed-up cash is believed to have been buried there after floating across a mile-wide flood plain, following a 1976 dredging over at Vancouver Lake. But **FBI refused to consider the Briggs's plot, let alone the lake cash-dumping theory. FYI: The retired FBI shore chief and his ex-Portland boss both now think RWR planted all the cash and should be re-investigated.**

7) Matching Print Style on DBC's Airline Ticket and "DBC" Letter #2 (9/19/14): TJC noticed similar hand-printing on the "Dan Cooper" boarding pass and the "DBC" letter sent to a Vancouver, BC paper. When he asked Vancouver PD if it still had original note, chief said it was either lost or purged with other '70s records. But in a court-ordered 6/19/17 FBI FOIA search, TJC spots memos from the FBI requesting and receiving the DBC #2 note from VPD in December 1971. CCT offers RWR's DNA to the FBI for note's lick-stamp or envelope flap comparison, but the **FBI refused to accept DNA or the private lab report.**

TJC hired two Forensic Document Experts to compare printing on ticket and DBC letter #2. Both experts separately concluded that "*similarities*" suggest they "*were written by one person.*" So if this four-letter chain beginning & ending near Rackstraw's CA home was his doing, this ticket-note match would put him on the hijack boarding line. But **FBI did not request either expert's forensic letter/ticket reports.**

8) Across-Aisle Passenger Fingers Rackstraw as DBC (Test on 9/21/15): A college kid in the back of the 1971 plane, responsible for the most credible sketch of hijacker, is tracked down by TJC. Now in his 60s, he looked at old mugshots from that era in a professional "six-pack" test – and immediately pointed at RWR. A South Carolina state investigator noted there are "*nine points of match*" between sketch and RWR. But an **FBI liaison who viewed the test called the video-taped result "questionable at best."**

9) FBI Collaborates with History Channel's DBC Show (Shot 4/2016; premiered 7/10/16): **After secret negotiations for six months, the Bureau agreed to participate** on air. Acting as both an FBI liaison and show host, former Assistant Director Tom Fuentes reviewed team's evidence for three days in 9/2015. Then he gave a conclusion on camera to TJC, starting: "*This is just the most outstanding example I've ever seen of a professional investigation...*" (Sadly, all his **praise later was cut from final program**).

A half-year later on the last shooting day and a week before CCT's promised trip to Seattle Division, **the meeting to turn over the 102 pieces of evidence was canceled and the DBC unsolved case was closed.**

Three on-camera agents then claimed the FBI decided to now only consider direct evidence, like the escape's cash or chute. The stone-faced **Fuentes also claimed to have learned there were three pieces of evidence that prove Rackstraw wasn't DBC (But within week, TJC finds all three pieces to be false).**

On History Channel's 7/10/16 premiere day, CCT discovered that the **top 18 pieces of their evidence** – including DBC and grifter de Winter's letter trails, DNA and document forensics, testimony from RWR's two ex-wives and his lover on fugitive runs – **were all edited out. The last case agent, Curtis J. Eng, then told the American public on television and in print that he had seen TJC's evidence and rejected it.**

10) FOIA Suit against FBI (7/13/16 to 1/31/17): When the man who formally closed the DBC case, FBI Seattle Division **Special Agent in Charge Frank Montoya Jr., told the History Channel audience on 7/11/16 that "there isn't anything new out there,"** TJC and partner-wife Dawna immediately instructed CCT attorney Mark S. Zaid to file an FOIA for the archived records and see if he is right. A half-year later, a federal judge ordered the monthly releases to begin arriving at the couple's website, DBCooper.com.

Among this year's first 3,616 (of the estimated 70,000) DBC pages were a handful of memos that could pertain to this investigation. Here's two: A pilot in a "suspect aircraft," touch-and-going on dirt strips in the jump zone, is identified through a "partial registration number" and gets interviewed; and a woman "heard a low-flying jet airplane," then soon saw "a well-dressed man walking along the road." She *"thought it strange to see such an individual in that [farming] area at that time of night."* Five weeks later, Seattle Division ordered an inquiry to *"determine if [walking man] is identical with D.B. Cooper."* Lawyer Zaid asked for the redactions to be lifted on these critical pages, but **no response from the FBI.**

11) Escape-Story Delivery and Dig Site Location (2/27/17 to 8/12/17): A man who allegedly heard the DBC getaway story from one of Cooper's 3 partners approached TJC on 2/27/17 with his career-cop wife. While confirming their details, CCT believed it found the two living crime-partners. The couple then took TJC's 8-member forensic team to the professed mountain burial spot of chute and remaining ransom.

Seattle Division said it'd reconsider the case if the evidence dealt with the parachute or cash (#9). So on 8/12/17, **agents there were surprised to hear** TJC and former FBI Supervisor Hadley McCann had turned in five dug-up fabrics, the dig site itself, research materials and contacts for two alleged crime-partners.

12) FBI Deadline (8/13/17): Now three months later, the **FBI has not approached the dig-site's property owner; not reported back on the fabrics' lab results; and is not believed to have contacted the two alleged DBC crime-partners.**

In an official 11/6/17 letter to the FBI (available), **attorney Zaid briefed new Director Christopher J. Wray** on the CCT's efforts and **Seattle Division's failure "to live up to its Mission" by ignoring "crucial new evidence that could solve the case."** Then Zaid ended, *"Unless we hear from a Bureau representative before November 13, 2017,"* the CCT *"shall continue to excavate the site as well as directly contact the alleged co-conspirators."*

Onward.