



ABC News has obtained some incredibly dramatic footage [scroll down for video] of an incident from nine years ago in which the CIA watched as a Peruvian air force fighter jets shot down a plane carrying American missionaries even as the pilot screamed for help.

The tape was shot from a CIA plane which was on assignment in Peru as part of anti-smuggling operations undertaken in coordination with the Peruvian air force. As ABC's Brian Ross notes, it has taken this long for the CIA to acknowledge its responsibility in the matter.

Traveling in the plane, which was mistakenly believed to be carrying drug smugglers, was a family of Christian missionaries from Michigan, the Bowers. The mother, Veronica Bowers, and her infant daughter were killed by bullets fired at the plane. Her husband and six-year-old son, as well as the pilot, survived. The family was flying back from a trip to Brazil.

What's perhaps most chilling about the video is that the CIA pilots clearly doubt that the plane is actually being used for drug smuggling, but are unable to communicate this to the Peruvian air force in time to stop an attack. "I don't know if this is bandito or amigo," one of the CIA pilots says. "This guy doesn't fit the profile." Later on, not long before the plane is shot down, one of the CIA pilots mutters. "I think we're making a mistake." They warn the Peruvian pilots not to shoot the plane down, but their warnings don't seem to be understood due to a language barrier.

In 2008, CIA inspector general John Helgerson accused his agency of trying to cover up the incident, the New York Times reported:

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