

## Hong Kong Airline's 'hit list'

Hong Kong - A secret "hit list" of nearly 200 pilots Hong Kong airline Cathay Pacific considered for sacking during a bitter 2001 dispute with cockpit crew was on Wednesday circulating among staff.

The list - leaked by an unknown member of the management panel that decided which pilots to fire - includes the 49 pilots fired during the dispute and around 100 pilots still with the airline.

Serving pilots on the list include a deputy chief pilot with the Boeing fleet and a number of senior training captains. All but a handful of them had no idea they were once shortlisted.

The airline, which confirmed that list of 195 pilots was genuine, has never before acknowledged the existence of a short list of out-of-favour pilots ahead of the infamous sackings in July 2001.

The document has been lodged as evidence in Hong Kong's High Court for an unfair dismissal action against the airline by 16 of the sacked pilots known as the 49ers, expected to be heard next year.

It was leaked to the Cathay Pilots Union, a breakaway union backing continuing legal action against the airline by the 49ers who have not settled their cases with the airline.

The union claims the list proves that Cathay deliberately targeted members of the main union the Aircrew Officers Association and that airline officials have "lied" over how sacked pilots were selected.

Cathay fired the pilots to break a work-to-rule by cockpit crew in a long-running dispute over pay and rosters.

Executives have since claimed the 49ers were selected after the employment records of all 1 500 serving pilots were scrutinized over a two-day period before the sackings.

The Cathay Pilots Union Tuesday emailed the list to all 195 pilots on it, along with a letter appealing to cockpit crew who escaped dismissal to support the 49ers' court case.

"Look at the list. You're on it. It could have been you," the letter says.

"You escaped termination but you could have been one of those selected to have your career destroyed. You could so very easily have been a 49er."

A Cathay spokesperson confirmed the list was genuine but said: "We will continue to robustly defend ourselves in any forthcoming proceedings as we have done in the past.

"We stand by all the evidence we have given in past proceedings. It will be up to the courts to decide on these matters, as is right and proper."

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