

Fake Pilot Discovered After 20 Years of Flying Airliners

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SAA Tlali Tlali pilot was arrested after the investigation discovered he has no pilot license.

The pilot was discovered accidentally, after he carried out an unusual maneuver while passing through the Swiss air.

([Newswire.net](#)-- March 6, 2019) -- William Chandler flew for the duration of his entire career with fake records, before South African Airways discovered he didn't go to a flight academy and took away his pilot license, [the Mirror reports](#).

According to South African media, South African Airways (SAA) found false papers investigating the incident that took place in November last year when a SA206 flight from South Africa's International Airport went through Swiss airspace.

Two sources told African's Mail & Guardian that Chandler, was the first officer on the flight that went through an investigation after executing an unusual maneuver in Swiss airspace.

"The airplane had turned strangely, and no one understood those maneuvers, and when they landed, they immediately wrote the report," said the air investigation officer. He added that these maneuvers also caused problems on the aircraft itself.

"When we have an incident like this, the aviation company opens an investigation to find out the key details, find out the facts and decides what to do, and this process is part of our standard business," said SAI Communications Manager.

Things were already odd after Chandler allegedly refused to upgrade to the rank of captain but no one really paid much attention. Chandler allegedly explained he loved being a first officer but the truth is that to obtain his captain documents he had to validate his pilot school papers again.

The pilots that joined the SAA with Chandler in January 1994 were already captains in 2005, while Chandler remained a first officer. Before that, Chandler worked as an engineer in the SAA.

Pilots are among the most paid employees of the SAA, and earn annuals up to \$400,000. The level of financial compensation depends, of course, on the skill and expertise of a particular pilot. The SAA air carrier is considering a lawsuit that would return at least part of the money that Chandler had so far been paid. He resigned as soon as it was discovered that he has fake documents.

Chandler's case is just the latest one in line of fake pilots flying airliners across the world. Thomas Salme, 41, was arrested at Amsterdam's international airport Schiphol, in the cockpit of a Boeing 737 as he was preparing for flight with 101 passengers onboard.

Salme was made a captain three years after conning his way on to the flight deck of the Scandinavian airline Air One, [Daily Mail reports](#).

The fake pilot was arrested after police received a tip-off that Salme once had a Commercial Pilot License (CPL) which had in fact expired years before he was arrested. He never acquired a license for piloting an airliner.

Upon his arrest, Salme claimed that he had also flown for British, Belgian and Italian airlines, though it is unclear for which ones.

He was fined £1,700 (\$2,230) and was banned from flying for 12 months by a Dutch court - which noted that in the entire 13 years, he had never caused an accident.

Salme explained that he learned to fly Boeing 737 in a full scale cockpit simulator where he secretly trained procedures. Salme said he created a fake license using Photoshop.

Taras Shelest, a highly-regarded passenger jet pilot was [arrested in 2015](#) after he flew thousands of people all around the world over the course of several years. A bizarre incident finally exposed him during a flight into Ukrainian airspace, after instead of using official terminology he greeted the Air Traffic Control (ATC) with "Glory to Ukraine".

This was so unusual that Shelest was reported to his company's security service. The investigation revealed that Shelest never attended a pilot academy but trained on a Microsoft Flight Simulator at home and faked his license. His "career" as an airliner pilot was otherwise spotless, but he was lucky to never encounter a real on-flight problem to challenge his knowledge, unlike the case of two fake pilots that flew a Mexican government jet.

On 4 November 2008 the Mexican Secretary of the Interior Juan Camilo Mouriño and 15 passengers and crew onboard Mexican government Lear Jet were killed in a bizarre flight [accident](#).

The air crash investigation discovered that both pilots were unfamiliar with the Flight Management Computer (FMC) of a Lear Jet 45 which brought them to a situation where the airplane was uncontrollable amid sudden turbulence. Their speed was too high and they were too close behind a heavy airliner on its final preparations to land.

The investigation further revealed a shocking fact that both the captain and the first officer faked their pilot licenses.

The plane crashed in rush-hour traffic during its approach to Mexico City International Airport. According to the investigation documents the plane followed a Boeing 767 too closely and encountered a jet wash that inverted into a nose-down position.

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