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## Irish nationals accused of causing problems on flight into Pullman

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By Joel Mills of the Tribune

### Pair apparently became unhappy over lack of cocktail service

Two not-so-lucky Irish nationals are facing assault charges after they allegedly hassled a flight attendant who cut off their booze.

Robert C. Little, 57, and Kathy Paxton, 26, were on the late flight from Seattle to Pullman Wednesday when a dispute erupted over their alcohol service, said Pullman police Sgt. Dan Dornes. The pilot declared a level 2 threat, which is defined by the Federal Aviation Administration as physically abusive behavior.

"They were apparently unhappy about not being served more alcohol," Dornes said. "There was allegedly some poking and grabbing of the steward by the passengers. Apparently, they demanded to speak to the pilot as well."

The airline called police at 11 p.m., Dornes said, and officers met the flight at the Pullman-Moscow Airport and escorted Little and Paxton off the plane. After interviews with other passengers, police arrested the two on felony charges of third-degree assault.

Dornes said if a similar incident happened on the ground, they would have been charged with misdemeanor fourth-degree assault because there were no injuries. "But because it was a commercial aircraft, it was treated at a higher level because transit operators can't be assaulted."

Deputy Whitman County Prosecutor Dan LeBeau said Little and Paxton were not officially charged at their initial appearance Thursday afternoon in Superior Court. They were released from the county jail on their own recognizance.

LeBeau said Little is in the country on business, and Paxton is his personal assistant. He said Little licenses breweries in the U.S., but didn't know which company he works for.

Little and Paxton were apparently flying to Pullman to work on licensing a brewery there, he said.

There is a chance federal investigators may take over the case since the alleged incident happened on a commercial flight, LeBeau said.

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