



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SAN LUIS OBISPO, California	Accident Number:	DCA88MA008
Date & Time:	December 7, 1987, 16:16 Local	Registration:	N350PS
Aircraft:	BRITISH AEROSPACE BAE-146-200	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	43 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 121: Air carrier - Scheduled		

Analysis

A RECENTLY DISCHARGED USAIR EMPLOYEE BOARDED PSA FLT 1771 AFTER HAVING LEFT A GOODBYE MESSAGE WITH FRIENDS. HE BYPASSED SECURITY AND CARRIED A BORROWED 44 CALIBER PISTOL. A NOTE WRITTEN BY THIS PSGR, FOUND IN THE WRECKAGE, THREATENED HIS FORMER SUPERVISOR AT USAIR, WHO WAS ABOARD THE FLT. AT 1613, THE PLT RPTD TO OAKLAND ARTCC THAT HE HAD AN EMERGENCY AND THAT GUNSHOTS HAD BEEN FIRED IN THE AIRPLANE. WITHIN 25 SECONDS, OAKLAND CTR CONTROLLERS OBSERVED THAT PSA 1771 HAD BEGUN A RAPID DESCENT FM WHICH IT DID NOT RECOVER. WITNESSES ON THE GND SAID THE AIRPLANE WAS INTACT AND THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF FIRE BEFORE THE AIRPLANE STRUCK THE GND IN A STEEP NOSE-DOWN ATTITUDE. THE CVR TAPE REVEALED THE SOUNDS OF A SCUFFLE AND SEVERAL SHOTS WHICH WERE APPARENTLY FIRED IN OR NEAR THE COCKPIT. THE PISTOL WAS FOUND IN THE WRECKAGE WITH 6 EXPENDED ROUNDS. FAA RULES PERMITTED AIRLINE EMPLOYEES TO BYPASS SECURITY CHECKPOINTS.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) SECURITY - INADEQUATE - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT
2. (F) PROCEDURE INADEQUATE - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT
3. (F) INSUFF STANDARDS/REQUIREMENTS, OPERATION/OPERATOR - FAA(ORGANIZATION)
4. (C) CONTROL INTERFERENCE - INTENTIONAL - PASSENGER
5. (C) SABOTAGE - INTENTIONAL - PASSENGER
6. (C) EMOTIONAL REACTION - PASSENGER
7. INCAPACITATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
8. INCAPACITATION - COPILOT/SECOND PILOT
9. SUICIDE - INTENTIONAL - PASSENGER

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 13, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	11600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1600 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BRITISH AEROSPACE	Registration:	N350PS
Model/Series:	BAE-146-200 BAE-146-20	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Transport	Serial Number:	E2027
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	83
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	89500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	40 Hrs	Engines:	4 Turbo fan
Airframe Total Time:	8571 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	ALF 502-R3
Registered Owner:	PACIFIC SOUTHWEST AIRLINES	Rated Power:	6700 Lbs thrust
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Flag carrier (121)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	PSAA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LAX	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	16:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LOS ANGELES , CA (LAX)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	SAN FRANCISCO , CA (SFO)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	15:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	5 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	38 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	43 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	37.450706,-122.100906(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Ensslin, Ken

Additional Participating Persons: T. BORSON;
P. BAKER;
B. DICKENS;
A. J HYLTON;

Original Publish Date: January 4, 1989

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=15893>

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).