



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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

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## 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

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

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

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	5 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	38 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	On-ground
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	43 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	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>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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