

CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
BUREAU OF SAFETY

September 25, 1961

TO : Members of the Board

FROM : Director, Bureau of Safety

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident - Preliminary Notification
Boeing 720B Astrojet, N 545AA, operated by American Airlines, Flight 44, Boston International Airport, Boston, Massachusetts, September 24, 1961

At approximately 11:03 a.m., EDT, September 24, 1961, American Airlines Flight 44, Los Angeles - Chicago - Boston, a passenger flight, overshot runway 4R at Boston International Airport and stopped approximately 60 feet from the end of the runway in 10 feet of water. The passengers were evacuated through the front and rear main cabin doors and through the emergency exits on to the wings. They were picked up by small boats which converged on the scene. There were no serious injuries reported. The aircraft was substantially damaged, numbers 1 and 2 engines being separated from the aircraft, and numbers 3 and 4 engines nearly separated. The nose wheel was partially collapsed backwards, and the floor and bottom of the fuselage were damaged. About 2 inches of water covered the cabin floor.

The aircraft had landed on runway 4R, which is the ILS (Instrument Landing System) - PAR (Precision Approach Radar) runway. This runway is 10,023 feet long. However, due to obstructions in the airport consisting in part of ship masts, the touchdown point for ILS and PAR glide slopes is approximately 3,500 feet up the runway, which leaves only slightly over 6,500 feet for touchdown and rollout. The ILS was inoperative and the flight was making a PAR approach.

The weather was given as 400-foot ceiling and 1 mile visibility, which is within PAR instrument approach landing minimums for American Airlines jet aircraft.

Air Safety Investigators Van Epps, Baker, and Stokes of the New York office left immediately after the accident to establish security and to initiate the investigation. However, Messrs. Van Epps and Baker are presently actively investigating the recent accident to a Pan American Airlines' DC-8 at Idlewild, New York, and will leave Boston today after coordinating with Mr. Collar of the Miami office who has been assigned as Investigator in Charge.

The crew of the aircraft was:

Captain Johnson
First Officer Ferdyn
Second Officer Edgar
Flight Engineer Stensech, and
four cabin attendants.

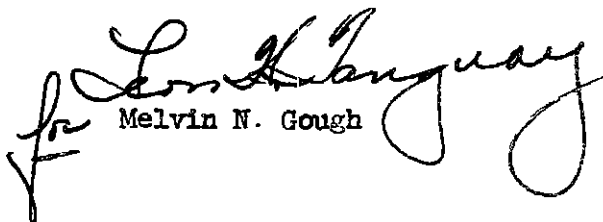
There were 63 passengers aboard.

The CAB investigating team will be composed of Mr. Charles Collar, Miami office, Investigator in Charge, Mr. Edwin Nelmes, Miami office, Chairman, Structures Group, Mr. Ralph Stokes, New York office, Chairman, Operations and Witness Group, Mr. Clifford Sheker, Chicago office, Chairman, Systems Group. Mr. William Buttlar, Washington office, will cover the hearing and reports phase pending the assignment of a hearing officer, since none is now available. Mr. William Halnon, meteorologist, of the Washington office, is in Boston to conduct a weather check and analysis.

All of the Air Safety Investigators assigned to the New York office with the exception of Mr. Stokes are actively engaged in other accident investigations and it was necessary to send out of region personnel to the scene.

Permission has been given American Airlines to move the aircraft to prevent damage due to water.

An organizational meeting will be held at 10 a m. this morning after which Messrs. Van Epps and Baker will return to New York.


for Melvin N. Gough