



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 25, 2023

Equity Over Safety: Did an Affirmative-action Pilot Crash a Plane?

The pilot had a history of acting “impulsively” during training and “an inability to remain calm during stressful situations,” an investigator said. These deficits would prove deadly, too, one fateful February day.

That’s right, Conrad Aska’s checkered flying past didn’t prevent him from being at the helm of Atlas Air Flight 3591, a cargo-carrying Boeing 767-375ER(BCF) traveling from Miami to Houston. But this wasn’t training, and when Aska hit the wrong switch as a result of turbulence and then became disoriented when the plane accelerated, he inadvertently plunged the craft into an unrecoverable dive.



Vladyslav Danilin/iStock/Getty Images Plus

This happened back on February 23, 2019. But exactly four years later, on Thursday, Fox News host Tucker Carlson used the tragic incident as a cautionary tale: Lowering standards in anything’s name — including “diversity’s” — can kill.

In fairness, we don’t know for certain that 44-year-old Aska, who was born in Antigua, kept his job due to affirmative action and “equity.” After all, crash investigators learned that he’d “withheld parts of his work history from the air carrier to conceal his troubles at other airlines,” [reported](#) ABC 13 in 2020. It’s also true that with pilots being in limited supply — there may be [a shortfall](#) of 30,000 pilots by 2025 — airlines may be scraping the bottom of the barrel looking for candidates to fill positions.

Nonetheless, airlines’ woke priorities inclusive of focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity (DIE) initiatives don’t inspire confidence.

Just consider what Atlas Air, Aska’s employer, has on its website. “We leverage diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a business strategy and driver of innovation,” the company states. “We are guided by DEI philosophy.” Of course, if this means its planes are guided by DIE hires, well, Houston, we have a problem.

Do note that DIE mission statements may be obligatory now because woke capital investors, such as [Larry Fink at BlackRock](#), use financial pressure to coerce companies into embracing politically correct policies.

Whatever the motivation, however, affirmative action pilots are a reality. Just consider a 2021 tweet (below) in which United Airlines proudly announced its intention to ensure that 50 percent of the 5,000 pilots they train in the next decade will be women or “people of color.” (I haven’t seen a person of no color, but, hey, maybe I don’t get out enough).

Our flight deck should reflect the diverse group of people on board our planes every day.



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That's why we plan for 50% of the 5,000 pilots we train in the next decade to be women or people of color. Learn more and apply now: <https://t.co/VbOFvFOksB>
pic.twitter.com/r0ScH6MQAJ

— United Airlines (@united) [April 6, 2021](#)

The above tweet was courtesy of Breitbart, which reported more on the story, [writing](#):

United said it will fund \$1.2 million in scholarships, and its credit card partner, JPMorgan Chase, committed the same amount to those accepted into the program.

“We are proud to partner with United to support the Aviate Academy’s mission to enable thousands to pursue their dream as a commercial airline pilot,” Ed Olebe, president of Chase Co-Brand Cards, stated.

“Investing in this program directly aligns with our efforts to advance racial equity by expanding career development opportunities and making tangible progress in a field where women and people of color are underrepresented,” Olebe continued.

Because, of course, it’s as with our military, which is now prioritizing wokeness over effectiveness. An airline’s purpose apparently isn’t to earn money providing air transport as efficiently and safely as possible, but to “advance racial equity by expanding career development opportunities.”

At least, however, there’ll now be congruence with the air-traffic-control corps, which already has been dumbed down. As The Blaze [related](#) in 2018, citing a *Tucker Carlson Tonight* report:

According to Carlson, due to changes implemented during the Obama administration, air traffic controller candidates are now required to complete a “biographical questionnaire” before even being considered for a job with the FAA.

If they don’t pass, they aren’t considered for a position — no matter how much experience they have or how qualified they are.

Fox News obtained a copy of the questionnaire and how it is scored. According to Carlson, candidates whose worst subject in high school was science [and who played a lot of sports] and candidates who are unemployed receive the most points possible on the test. In contrast, licensed pilots and those with extensive air traffic control knowledge aren’t highly scored.

“In other words, the FAA actively searched for unqualified air traffic controllers,” Carlson later said. “That is insane, and they knew it was insane when they did it, but they did it anyway.”

As for pilots, their shortfall does need to be addressed. But a sane program geared toward that end would engage in outreach and seek to identify candidates based on interest and ability; perhaps IQ, eyesight (of course), capacity to focus, situational awareness, grace under pressure, and keen judgment of spatial relationships would be some of the relevant criteria.

Since merit isn’t currently prioritized, however, perhaps someone needs to compile a list of airlines that do and *don’t* hire pilots based on dangerous DIE criteria (European carriers *may* be less likely to). That way, customers can maximize their safety and vote against wokeness with their ticket purchases.



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For those interested, Carlson's Thursday woke-airlines segment is below.

As for the bigger picture, some may wonder how DIE criteria could be applied to roles that are matters of life or death. The answer is that we can't expect a civilization's prevailing "religion," so-called leftism in our time, to not be applied religiously by its zealous enforcers — even when that religion is a false one.



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