



# PAPA INDIA

*...it is impossible to make the men perfect... and no legislation will make a man have more presence of mind... Or make him more cautious...*

Isambard Kingdom Brunel,  
Chief Engineer of the Great Western Railway;  
Parliamentary Select Committee on Railways, 1841

On Sunday 18th June 1972 at 16.11 hours the British European Airways Trident 1 G-ARPI (Papa India) crashed in a field near Staines, Middlesex. It was the BE 548 flight to Brussels and all 118 people on board died of their injuries. The aircraft brakes had been released 150 seconds earlier on Runway 28R (the right-hand runway, whose direction to the nearest ten degrees was 280 degrees). The aircraft was 24kg above its maximum permitted take-off weight, but this was not important. It had both valid certificates of airworthiness and of maintenance. The handling pilot, who was also the pilot in command (P1), was Captain Stanley Key, aged fifty-one years, with a total of some 19,000 flying hours, four thousand of which were as pilot-in-command on the Trident.

The co-pilot (P2), Second Officer (S/O) J. W. Keighley, was twenty-two years of age and inexperienced. This was of concern to the Accidents Investigation Branch (AIB) and its report (4/73) was discursive on the issue. He had completed his commercial pilot training and gained his CPL, and instrument rating (I/R), at the College of Air Training at Hamble in some 225 hours. On the Trident flight simulator he had completed a total of fifty-one hours as P1/2/3 (pilot in command/second officer/third pilot in flight engineer role) with a further seventeen hours of base training – flying the aircraft under tuition of a base

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