

UAL1117, 27SEP2021, departed at 2209z, KDEN-KEWR, B757-200, LCA Conducting OER (Operational Experience Refresher) for requalifying Captain, I was the PM, and PIC of record.

On the afternoon 26SEP I contacted Capt. Williams to discuss the upcoming OER. We discussed expectations and preparations for the trip. We agreed to meet early at 1400 local time on 27SEP to brief for the flight.

During the briefing we discussed the higher threat level that exists during OE training. We both agreed to take extra time when needed to resolve any concerns or uncertainties. Our review of the weather forecast found generally good weather for departure, enroute, and arrival. Of note, there were multiple turbulence reports for the initial climb and there was also a forecast for gusty winds on arrival in EWR. The NOTAM review found nothing pertinent to our anticipated taxi route departure runway or SID. For our arrival there was some taxiway closures near our anticipated landing runway 22L, but they were not likely to be a factor. I did comment that 22L was open again for the first time in a while.

We discussed personal, technical, and environmental threats. The personal threats discussed were training, lack of recent experience, and not sitting in primary crew positions. There were no significant technical threats and only a minor deferral for a vent in the cockpit with low flow. The environmental threat discussed was gusty winds for arrival.

During the preflight Capt. Williams and I both did the exterior inspection as part of the OER. There was no visible scraping or damage present on the tail of the aircraft. The rest of the departure preparation, taxi out, take off, and departure proceeded normally without incident. Enroute, the flight proceeded normally as well. The only item of note was that it was more turbulent than forecast enroute.

Prior to the top of descent, we completed the approach briefing and the descent checklist. Arrival and approach were normal. The forecasted gusty winds were present and on the ATIS. At approximately 800' AGL I asked for an updated wind report. We adjusted target airspeed to half the steady state and full gust above ref.

The approach was very well flown and initial touchdown was well within all parameters and approximately 1500'-2000' from the arrival threshold. Very shortly after mainwheel touchdown there was a significant pitch up not unlike the pitch up caused by speed brake deployment. Capt. Williams suggested a go around, but I advised him to continue as I felt that the pitch up was normal speed brake deployment. However, the speed brakes had not deployed normally, and the pitch up was caused by something else.

The aircraft skipped and then began to bounce. I took control of the aircraft and attempted to execute a go around. But, as I was unable to advance the thrust levers and did not feel I had time to diagnose why, I elected to land on the remaining runway. Based on my prior experience on the 757-200 I would say that the behavior of the aircraft upon touchdown was very unusual and unexpected.

After arrival at the gate, we did a post flight inspection and found evidence of a tail strike. We reported this and the fact that the speed brakes did not deploy normally on landing to maintenance and contacted the Flight Operations Duty Manager.

United Airlines Flight 1117, September 27, 2021, DEN-EWR, B757-200

On September 27th, I was scheduled for OE as a regular Captain on the 757/767. I met the Line Check Airman in Denver Ops approximately two hours before scheduled departure to operate a flight from Denver to Newark. We had a good brief and operated the flight in accordance with the SOPs. I was Pilot Flying in the left seat, with the LCA as PIC in the right seat.

On Approach into Newark, the ATIS was reporting visuals to 22L center line lights out of service, clear skies and gusty winds. I used the autopilot to get established on the localizer and upon glide slope capture, I clicked off the auto pilot and flew a stable approach to touchdown. On initial contact, the ground spoilers did not deploy. Due to that, we skipped and became airborne again. I held the pitch and allowed the aircraft to touch back down. At that time, the ground spoilers started to deploy. We then got another pitch up sensation that, perhaps with a gust, kept the aircraft from settling. I called for a Go Around.

The LCA made the call to stay with the aircraft a little longer and placed his hands on the thrust levers and started to take control. We landed the aircraft and exited the runway at taxiway November. Other than a last-minute gate change, we were able to taxi to the gate without further incident.

I believe it was at the time when the spoilers deployed on the second touchdown or when I made the initial effort to Go Around that the tail made contact with the runway. We spoke with the Inflight Manager and all the passengers and crew were ok.

The aircraft gave us a pitch report on our landing of 3.5. However, due to the unusual nature of the event, we did a post flight inspection and discovered the scrape on the tail section of the aircraft. We reported it to Maintenance through the FODM as we had already shut down and secured the aircraft.

Captain Geran Williams