



By [Todd Rahmes](#)
on [10 Sep 2018 3:31](#)

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OK, this is the tough post for me. I flew backseat as a TACCO in P-3s for 3000 hours. So I have a Navy background. I relayed what I learned to an A-6 pilot and very good friend, and he said, kindly, that you never want to be the cause of an airframe change or a NATOPS (NAVY POH basically) change, because it either means your are dead or infamous. Nonetheless, I hope I'm the cause of an airframe change.

Sitting in the ER it finally dawned on me what had likely happened. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] when I couldn't free the cord from the front edge of the seat at the floor with my right hand, I went down with my left hand, and must have hit the pump rocker switch with my right elbow, shifting it to full boost/prime. I was at the absolute worst altitude for troubleshooting, it was pull the chute or pray that I could find the cause while I was having to take over from the

autopilot to correct the sink rate I was experiencing. So I pulled. Definitely not Sully, definitely not a great pilot. But I am alive. And so is my wife. That we can take credit for at least.

And I know I'm experiencing all the second guessing etc. but I just wanted you all to know what in fact happened. Because when the FAA investigator went to the aircraft (he was also doing double duty for the NTSB), the first thing he did was investigate my theory (I was totally honest with him, which I think is the way to go regardless). I called him, and he kind of hesitated, and said, yes, the switch was in full boost/prime. My heart sank, but that's the way it goes. 1200 hours of making many mistakes like all of us I think and learning from them, and not repeating them, and exercising the aircraft the way it was meant to be exercised through weather, ice, minimums etc. but this time it was just a mistake I couldn't recover from.

It occurs to me that [REDACTED] pilots wouldn't inadvertently change that switch position if as my A6 buddy suggested Cirrus would put a hefty ridge around it to make it just a little bit more difficult to move it. Or even as my A7 brother in law thought, a clear flip up guard. Just a thought. But, pilot error is pilot error, no excuses, don't get me wrong. It would not have happened had I used better judgement and gotten to higher altitude, because I would've figured it out, then, I'm certain. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]