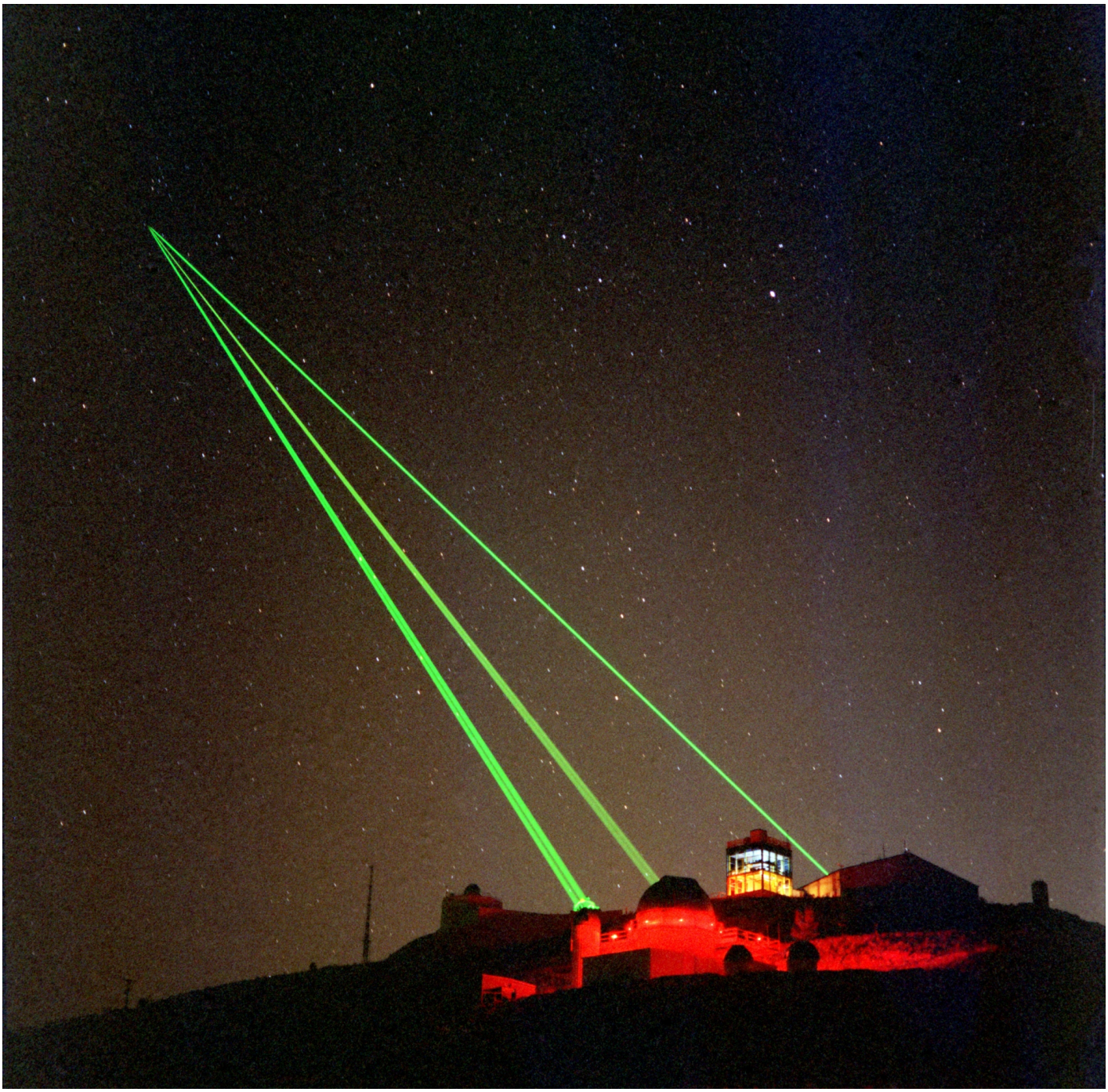
LANCASTER, CA MAN IN CUSTODY AFTER POINTING LASER LIGHT AT 2 PLANES

News / Airlines



A 27-year-old Lancaster man has been arrested for **pointing a laser light** at a commercial aircraft, then pointing it at the Los Angeles Sheriff's airplane that came looking for him, endangering both planes, Sheriff's officials said Saturday.

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The pilot of a commercial aircraft flying over the Antelope Valley on Thursday night informed federal aircraft controllers that someone had aimed a powerful green laser several times into the cockpit.

"The situation created a potentially dangerous and challenging situation for the pilot, and was reported to have caused temporary visual impairment," according to a Los Angeles Sheriff's Department news release.

Aircraft controllers then notified the sheriff's Lancaster station, which dispatched a fixed wing aircraft from the Law Enforcement Airborne Platform System, deputies said.

The LEAPS aircraft pilot spotted the green laser light, which was aimed at the police plane several times, "causing distraction and temporary visual impairment to the pilot."

The pilot then directed sheriff's Lancaster station patrol deputies on the ground to the vicinity of the laser light.

Deputies arrested a 27-year-old man at a home in the 42000 block of 30th Street East on a charges of discharging a laser at an aircraft.

The man, who remains unidentified, is being held at Lancaster Sheriff's Station in lieu of $25,000.00 bail.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft can be charged as a misdemeanor or felony. A misdemeanor conviction is punishable by up to one year in county jail and a $1,000 fine. A felony conviction is punishable by 16 months, two years or three years in state prison and a $2,000 fine.

Laser strike incidents against aircraft have increased dramatically since 2009 and pose a serious threat to aviation across the U.S., according to the news release.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in conjunction with the LASD Aero Bureau, Homeland Security and the FBI has produced a video about the possible dangers of green laser pointers.

Deputies advised residents witnessing anyone point a laser at an aircraft to call 9-1-1.

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