

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name Schlitt		First Name Angela		Middle Name Marie	I N C I D E N T	Case No. 17-22212		
Address Hartford WI 53027						Document No.		
City Hartford						Location		
State WI						City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐		
Zip Code 53027						ERIN		
Date of Birth		Sex F	Employer Erin School			Month JUNE		
Home Phone Number		Cell Phone Number () ()		Work Phone Number () ()		Day 15		Year 2017

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I met with Detective David Klopfenstein on June 20th 2017, regarding the Blimp that crashed on June 15th, 2017. I was staying at my Mother-in-law's house at 1504 Dublin Drive. We had been watching the blimp all morning as it was exciting to see. We all went inside to grab some lunch. We had noticed and had made many comments to each other about how windy it was and that the pilot seemed to have to keep repositioning the blimp. We could hear the motor being turned on and off during these times. When we had gone in for lunch, we were watching the blimp from Jean's dining room bay window which faces west. The blimp was still at the tree line, we could still see it clearly. We noticed that the blimp started to descend which we assumed he was trying to land. The blimp then went back up in the air at a fairly fast rate - faster than when he was coming down. We could still hear the engine, and noticed that a cord dropped down, we didn't hear any other noises of any kind. We then noticed that it started to deflat. At that time we knew something was wrong. You could then see that the material was melting and could see a flame. Jean called 911. The blimp then went below the tree line and you could only see smoke. I got in my car and drove to my brother in law's house which is just north of Jean's, to see if I could help.

Statement Made To Klopfenstein 427/475	Made At Home	Time 11:52AM	Date 6/20/17
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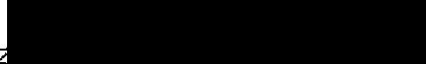
Witness **[Redacted] 427/475** Signed **[Redacted]**
Washington Co Sheriff Page: **10** of **2** pages.

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Case No.
Schiff	Angela	Maria	17-22212

I ran out into the field to see if I could help. As I was running there were two explosions that I could see the flames and hear. By the time I had reached the tree line, there was already people helping out. I had taken just a short video of the blimp after it had already gone down. As I waited, Sean Stapleton came down a trail in his truck with a Sheriff's officer. They tried to pull down the land closer to the blimp, but were told to back up as the fire was still burning. I did not see or hear anything that would have caused the crash.

Statement Made To	Made At	Time	Date
Klopfenstein 427/475	Home	11:50AM	6/20/17

Witness  427/475
Washington Co Sheriff

Signed 
Page: 2 of 2 pages.

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name Justman		First Name Caleb		Middle Name C	I N C I D E N T	Case No. 17-22212			
Address [REDACTED]						Document No.			
City Mortford		State WI		Zip Code 53007		Location Hwy 83 / Terry Rd			
Date of Birth [REDACTED]	Sex M	Employer Erin Meadows LLC				City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ Erin			
Home Phone Number ()		Cell Phone Number [REDACTED]		Work Phone Number ()	Month June			Day 15	Year 2017

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

Me and cody were weedwhacking when Cody came running up to me. He had seen the blimp go down and told me about good we loaded up and came racing down and as we turned the corner we saw the blimp explode again on the ground. We stopped and walked across the field to go help. I helped direct the fire atv across and directed one of the brush trucks. Cody then called 911 and we headed to the end of the highway to help direct fire engines. None came and we headed back down to help at the crash site. We then spoke to officers and firemen to see if we could assist further.

Statement Made To Deputy J. LaGosh	Made At on-scene	Time 12:13	Date 6-15-17
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Witness Caleb Justman Signed [REDACTED]
Page: 1 of 1 pages.

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name <u>Gastholmew</u>		First Name <u>Cody</u>		Middle Name <u>Allen</u>	I N C I D E N T	Case No. <u>17-22212</u>		
Address [REDACTED]						Document No.		
City <u>Hartford</u>		State <u>WI</u>		Zip Code <u>53027</u>		Location <u>H 83 / Tully Rd.</u>		
Date of Birth [REDACTED]	Sex <u>M</u>	Employer <u>Eric Pedon LLC</u>				City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ <u>Erin</u>		
Home Phone Number <u>(NA)</u>		Cell Phone Number [REDACTED]		Work Phone Number <u>(NA)</u>		Month <u>Jun</u>	Day <u>15</u>	Year <u>2017</u>

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

Me and co worker were weed wacking when I turned around and saw the blimp coming down. The blimp was coming down and it had flames on it. The blimp was slowly coming to the ground and I saw the pilot parachuting out of the blimp. We ran to our vehicle and drove back to help. When we turned the corner we saw a large ball of flames and a loud boom sound. After this we parked our vehicle and helped the first responders go through the tree line.

Statement Made To <u>Deputy J. Labach</u>	Made At <u>On-scene</u>	Time <u>12:14</u>	Date <u>6-15-17</u>
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Witness Cody Gastholmew Signed [REDACTED]
Page: 1 of 1 pages.

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name Schlitt		First Name Jean		Middle Name A	I N C I D E N T	Case No. 17-22212		
Address [REDACTED]						Document No.		
City Hartford		State WI		Zip Code 53027		Location		
Date of Birth [REDACTED]	Sex F	Employer Retired				City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ ERIN		
Home Phone Number [REDACTED]		Cell Phone Number [REDACTED]		Work Phone Number ()		Month JUNE	Day 15	Year 2017

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I met with Detective Klopferstein about the blimp that crashed on Thursday, June 15th. I had been outside watching it all morning. At one point I came back in the house to fix lunch. My dining room faces the area where we could continue to watch the blimp clearly. My grandchildren & daughter-in-law were with me and we stood at our large bay window with the side windows open. We saw the blimp come down about even to the tops of the trees, and then rise back up! We thought he might be trying to land so we watched carefully. He didn't hear any sounds, but suddenly we saw the blimp begin to crinkle and elongate. Then we saw flames & smoke.

Statement Made To KLOPFERSTEIN 427/475	Made At Home	Time 6:10 PM	Date 6/19/17
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Witness **[REDACTED] 427/475** Signed **[REDACTED]**
WASHINGTON Co Sheriff Page: **1** of **2** pages.

Last Name Schlitt	First Name Jean	Middle Name A	Case No. 17-22212
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and could see it coming down. I saw something fall off & thought someone had jumped. Apparently, it was a piece from the blimp. I quickly called 911. It had been down for awhile when we heard two explosions and saw lots of black smoke. Needless to say, we were all very shook up.

Statement Made To Klopfenstein 427/475	Made At Home	Time 6:10 P.M.	Date 6/19/17
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Witness  427/475
WASHINGTON Co SHERIFF

Signed 
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STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Schmitt Jeremiah		Jeremiah		Nathaniel			
Last Name		First Name		Middle Name			
[Redacted]							
Address							
Bronson		FL		32621			
City		State		Zip Code			
[Redacted]		M		Air Sign			
Date of Birth		Sex		Employer			
Home Phone Number ()		Cell Phone Number [Redacted]		Work Phone Number ()			
I N C I D E N T						Case No. 17-22212	
						Document No.	
						Location Hwy 03 / Terry Rd	
						City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ Erin	
Month June		Day 15		Year 17			

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I am part of the ground crew for the blimp and I was getting ready to sit down when I heard over the radio that the winds were bad and he was going to try to land. As he began his descent he ran into wind thermal's which started to lift the blimp up and made it impossible to land - one thermal blew the blimp up ~~into~~ higher and he started going backwards. (away from runway into grass field). As I was running across the ^{run} field to be there when he landed, I saw the front of the blimp shrivel up and catch fire, immediately the blimp envelope started on fire and the whole blimp and gondola began to fall. I turned around and ran back to the trailer and grabbed the fire extinguisher and ran ~~the~~ through the farm field, through some trees, across a grass road and into another field with tall thick grass where the blimp had crashed. As I ran I saw the blimp in flames and hissing like a explosion was going to happen, as my brother (Matt) pulled the pilot (Trevor Thompson) away from the crash, I rushed over to try to help and possibly use the extinguisher myself. Matt and Trevor all got low when the 3 propane tanks exploded, one tank blew up and flew into the grass so I ran over to extinguish it, but it didn't catch fire. I then returned and stood with Matt and Pilot (Trevor) who was on the ground and talking. I stayed there until 2 police officers came and advised me to move to a safe distance.

Statement Made To Deputy L'Alder #485	Made At Incident Location	Time 1235 PM	Date 6-15-17
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Witness _____ Signed _____

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STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Schmidt Joshua Paul

Last Name		First Name		Middle Name		I N C I D E N T	Case No.		
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]			17-22212		
Address							Document No.		
Branson Florida 32621							Location		
City State Zip Code							Hy 83 / Terry Rd		
Date of Birth		Sex	Employer			City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐			
[REDACTED]		male	Airsign			Erin			
Home Phone Number		Cell Phone Number		Work Phone Number		Month		Day	Year
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]		June		15	17

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

from what I saw the balloon part of the airship ripped on the under side and then it began to deflate in the air before it began to fall, me and 2 coworkers started running in the direction that it was falling I saw it fall pretty much the whole way until I lost sight of it behind the trees when I got through the tree I caught sight of it again and it was on fire when I got half way across the field I saw one of my coworkers pulling the pilot away from the wreckage so I stopped running and waited for the three propane ~~tanks~~ tanks in the airship to explode before going any closer, after those exploded I went to check on the pilot and coworker who both seemed fine except the pilot was burned and complained of back and neck pain after that I saw to state Troopers coming that way so I went to answer their questions and after that all the rest of the officers and firemen showed up

Statement Made To	Made At	Time	Date
Deputy L'Allies #485	Incident location	12 ³⁵ PM	6-15-17

Witness _____ Signature _____

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STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name <i>Smith</i>		First Name <i>Julius</i>		Middle Name <i>Mykko</i>	I N C I D E N T	Case No. <i>17-22212</i>			
Address <i>[Redacted]</i>						Document No.			
City <i>Archer</i>		State <i>FL</i>		Zip Code <i>32618</i>		Location <i>Hy 83/Tarryred</i>			
Date of Birth <i>[Redacted]</i>						City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ <i>Erin</i>			
Sex <i>M</i>		Employer <i>Air Sign</i>			Month <i>June</i>		Day <i>15</i>		Year <i>17</i>
Home Phone Number <i>() ()</i>		Cell Phone Number <i>[Redacted]</i>		Work Phone Number <i>() ()</i>					

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I was on rope duty, Josh & I. Waiting for the pilot to land. Somehow the wind picked up speed & cause the plane to spark a fire. Josh, Mykko, & I took primary action of the incident. While Jeremiah grabbed the fire extinguisher. As the three of us Matt Josh & I running toward the incident before it crashed landed into the near by field across from the landing strip. ~~It~~ I happened so fast, as ~~we~~ were running calling out Trevor's name, it finally crashed as we ~~ran~~ ran closer luckily he (Trevor) poked his head up. ~~He~~ Matt runs over to him & tells us that we had to stay back. As he (Matt) pull Trevor away from the incident the explosion. Then five sec later the second on. Around the third explosion the medical staff fire department as well as the sheriff's department was out fast enough to control the situation. They were able to obtain visual statements from ~~the~~ our entire crew Matt Josh Jeremiah & I. As Trevor was able to be rescue in time.

Statement Made To <i>Deputy Lallier #485</i>	Made At <i>Incident location</i>	Time <i>1235 PM</i>	Date <i>6-15-17</i>
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Witness _____ Signed *[Redacted]*

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STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name <u>Stepleton</u>		First Name <u>Michael</u>		Middle Name <u>Thomas</u>		I N C I D E N T	Case No. <u>17-22212</u>			
Address							Document No.			
City <u>Hartland</u>							Location			
State <u>WI</u>							City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ <u>ERIN</u>			
Date of Birth 		Sex <u>M</u>		Employer <u>Self</u>			Month <u>JUNE</u>		Day <u>15</u>	Year <u>2017</u>
Home Phone Number 		Cell Phone Number 		Work Phone Number ()						

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

On 6-15-17 I spoke to

David Kaptenstein about the Blimp crash.

Before 9 AM I was aware of Blimp preparing to launch from a private landing strip that is not permitted for public use. I was unhappy about this activity so I call 911 Washington County and FAA in Milwaukee.

I spoke with two deputies at my home.

Then I left to the US Open. I arrived about 10 or 1030. While enjoying the day of Golf I saw the Blimp going down with what looked like flames. After that there was smoke. Later my son called and told me it had crashed.

Statement Made To <u>Kaptenstein 427/475</u>		Made At <u>6-15-17 US Open</u>		Time <u>1350</u>	Date <u>6-15-17</u>
Witness <u>[Redacted] 427/475</u> <u>Washington Co Sheriff</u>		Signed <u>[Redacted]</u>			
		Page: <u>1</u> of <u>1</u> pages.			

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name WERWINSKI		First Name ROBERT		Middle Name —	I N C I D E N T	Case No. 17-22212		
Address HARTFORD WI 53027						Document No.		
City HARTFORD						Location 44 83 11 TONY RD		
State WI						City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐ ERIN		
Zip Code 53027						Month June		
Date of Birth [REDACTED]		Sex M	Employer RETIRED			Day 15	Year 17	
Home Phone Number [REDACTED]		Cell Phone Number [REDACTED]		Work Phone Number () —				

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I SAW THE BLIMP FLYING AROUND NORMALLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE, THEN NOTICED THAT IT WAS IN THE BACK FIELD, IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS GOING UP & DOWN, NOT MORE THAN A COUPLE OF MINUTES, THE CRASH HAPPENED EAST OF WHERE I SAW IT.

Statement Made To Deputy LALIC #485	Made At Incident Location	Time 3⁰⁰	Date 6-15-17
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Witness _____ Signed **[REDACTED]**

Page: _____ of _____ pages.

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

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Case No. 17-22212		
Document No.		
Location Hwy 83 / Terry Rd.		
City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐		
Erin		
Month 8 Jun	Day 15	Year 2017

Last Name Callan		First Name William	Middle Name R
Address [REDACTED]			
City Martford	State WI	Zip Code 53027	
Date of Birth [REDACTED]	Sex M	Employer Kerry Ingraham	
Home Phone Number () ()	Cell Phone Number () ()	Work Phone Number [REDACTED]	

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

I & my girlfriend Linda were watching blimp floating to the south east of our property 1/4 mile away. Blimp was floating in horizontal position for 2 to 3 hours. I could hear the fan going on & off on blimp when he would reposition himself to move to the west. He had the front nose of blimp facing to west when we were watching him for 2 to 3 hours. Then all of a sudden as we were looking at blimp the side of blimp near the center collapsed in a little bit then it did the same thing again but had more of a barrel shape to it. Then after the side went in the second time the blimps started going nose down to the ground. This nose down to ground event took approximately 45 seconds to a minute, maybe a little more than that. When it was almost vertical down we seen a flash of flame.

Statement Made To Deputy J. Lebus	Made At 1915 Terry Rd	Time 19:41	Date 6-16-17
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Witness _____ Signed [REDACTED]

Page: 1 of 2 pages.

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Case No.
Collins	William	R24	17-22212

from the back of blimp & we then started to see smoke. Then it started going down as it drifted to the southeast.

Statement Made To	Made At	Time	Date
Deputy J. L. Cosh	1915 Terry Rd	19:41	6-15-17

Witness _____

Signed _____
Page: 2 of 2 pages.

STATEMENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 1986
West Bend, WI 53095-7986

Last Name <u>Schmidt</u>		First Name <u>Matthew</u>		Middle Name <u>Oliver</u>	I N C I D E N T	Case No. <u>17-77712</u>		
Address [REDACTED]						Document No.		
City <u>Williston</u>						Location <u>Hy 83 / Terry Rd</u>		
State <u>FL</u>						City ☐ Township ☒ Village ☐		
Zip Code <u>32696</u>						<u>Erin</u>		
Date of Birth	Sex <u>M</u>	Employer <u>Patrick P Walsh</u>			Month <u>June</u>	Day <u>15</u>	Year <u>17</u>	
Home Phone Number ()		Cell Phone Number [REDACTED]		Work Phone Number ()				

I freely and voluntarily make the following statement:

We were doing some Blimp flights near the US open Trevor had just landed at 11:00am he had just put 2 propane tanks and topped him off with fuel he was going back up for another flight about 15min after he went up he called on the radio and said he was going to land because the wind was picking up. As he was coming to land at about 500ft the Envelope just lost all the air and just started to come down and also started on fire we all started running when we thought it would end up I was in the front trying to get to him as fast as I could because of the fire once I got closer I was yelling his name to try and make sure he was out or ok I heard him yelling far to when he was had him lay on his back and pulled him as far away as I could before the tanks exploded I got maybe 50ft away when one went off and pulled him another 75ft just trying to get him to safety another tank exploded then just talked with him until EMS got there.

Statement Made To <u>Deputy L'Allier #485</u>	Made At <u>Incident location</u>	Time <u>1:00 PM</u>	Date <u>6-15-17</u>
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Witness _____ Signed _____
Page: 1 of 2 pages.

Sullivan PAM

Subject: FW: Blimp Crash at Erin, WI CEN17FA231
Attachments: Blimp06152017.JPG

From: Mary Warzyn [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 16, 2017 6:22 AM
To: eyewitnessreport <eyewitnessreport@ntsb.gov>
Subject: Blimp Crash at Erin, WI

Hello,

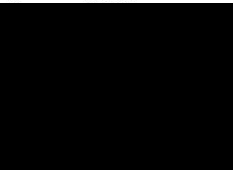
On Thursday, June 15, 2017 I was standing at the Erin Elementary School at the corner of County Road O and Terry Rd, in Erin, WI. I saw the blimp, quite low in the sky, just above the tree line. I thought it odd that it was down so low. This was probably in the range of 11:05AM to 11:13 AM. The blimp did then begin to climb and regain its altitude. The next time I noticed the blimp, while still mostly inflated, it began to hinge in the middle, with the nose collapsing downward. It appeared that there where rips or holes in the top of the blimp and air was escaping. The material was flapping from the air movement. Moments later, I took this picture, which appears to show flames while still in the air. I was standing next to the Washington County Deputy Sheriff who called the accident in.

Hope this was helpful.

Sincerely,

M. Dee Warzyn

M. Dee Warzyn, Campus Security Coordinator
Human Resources



**WAUKESHA
COUNTY TECHNICAL
COLLEGE**

800 Main Street
Pewaukee, Wisconsin 53072