

RECORD OF ☐ VISIT ☒ CONFERENCE OR ☐ TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 1:30 PM	DATE 10/12/2023
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Krzysztof Zapart - PIC of Balloon D-OGBL on 10/9/2023.		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
Fritz Bayer - FAA IIC, Jason Brown - FAA ASI, Andrew Black - FBI			
Interview conducted at Dallas, TX, Parkland Memorial Hospital, 6th floor,			
Room #628.			
SUBJECT Gas Balloon accident investigation, near Crandall, TX on October 9, 1921			
CST.			
DIGEST Mr. Zapart was not medicated and was ambulatory at the time of this interview. He spoke mostly understandable English, with an only occasional confused word that needed additional clarifications. Mr. Zapart stated he was the PIC on this flight and Mr. Halas was SIC. Mr. Zapart reported they were changing altitude from 11,000ft down to 4,000ft due to wind direction and speed, necessary to continue flight through the night. Mr. Zapart stated they went down to 3000-3500ft and heard semi-automatic gunshots below them, straight ahead, while heading N/NE (about 5 to 15 minutes before the accident). After questioning him multiple times regarding this, he stated that no bullets were heard impacting the balloon nor passing nearby at any time. After discussing the gunfire sounds below with Mr. Halas, they decided to land immediately because of their perception that Americans might be trigger happy regarding balloon overflights due to the previous overflights in American airspace by Chinese Spy Balloons. Mr. Zapart stated they started with 600 kilos of ballast and they were down to about 200 kilos at the time of the accident. Mr. Zapart stated that they were jettisoning ballast as they were descending, to slow their decent and in an attempt to rise over the wires and powerstation,			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED This accident is currently under investigation. REF: ATQA# [REDACTED], NTSB ID CEN24LA009			
DATE 10/12/2023		TITLE IIC & ASI	SIGNATURE FRITZ C BAYER Digitally signed by FRITZ C BAYER Date: 2023.10.16 12:19:00 -05'00'

DIGEST (CONT)

and when he saw the electrical power station rapidly approaching, he realized they would not make it over the electrical power station so he pulled the gas vent parachute valve to maximum, "Hydro release" at about 50 to 100 ft above the ground, about 3 seconds prior to impact. Mr. Zapart stated the basket hit the ground first then the envelope blew into the power lines creating a spark and an explosion of the hydrogen gas. Mr. Zapart and bystanders from the adjacent highway traffic helped get badly injured Mr. Halas out of the basket just before an oxygen bottle in the basket blew up. He stated that Mr. Halas had ducked down into the bottom of the basket as impact was imminent. He also described pilot and co pilot duties, the fact that the gas releasing parachute valve had a 5 meter circumference, and some other technical operations information. FBI Agent present asked additional questions related to his foreign travels and his family / relatives, as well as his plans for returning to Poland, his native country. The Interview concluded at approximately 1500 CST, and all parties left the room. Following this interview conclusion, Inspectors Bayer and Brown went up to the 15th floor, Room 409, where the co pilot Mr. Halas, was assigned, (although he was in surgery) and left Mr. Halas' Pilot Certificates wallet and burnt remains of Passport pages with the Charge Nurse along with a copy of Form 8020-2. Following this, Inspectors Bayer & Brown exited the hospital.