



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Aaron McCarter
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: September 29, 2015
Person Contacted: Robert Craig Spencer; Passenger
NTSB Accident Number: ERA15LA319

Narrative:

The following is a summary of the conversation with a passenger witness:

Mr. Spencer and his fiancé had made several attempts to go on a hot air balloon ride with the New Horizon Balloon Team, but it kept getting postponed due to weather. He felt good knowing that the company wouldn't take unnecessary weather risks.

The company called about a week before the date and said that there was an opening and the weather looked good.

On the day of the flight, they arrived on at the takeoff area and spoke to the pilot. There was a brief dialogue between the pilot and his wife (the company scheduler) after she appeared to pull up in haste and have a conversation with the pilot.

Spencer thought that it was a little strange because they have spoken to her many times, and she didn't stop to say hi. When she departed, the pilot said "let's go."

After takeoff, they stayed relatively low and never got above 1,000 feet. He said the pilot took them down to check the ground level wind speed a couple of times.

After some radio communications with the ground crew, the pilot commented that the ground crew was brand new. His fiancé has a portion of the conversation on her phone.

Pilot asked if it was ok that they were landing about 10 minutes early. Spencer assumed it was because it was getting dark.

It looked like the landing field was small and there were powerlines bordering the field. The pilot did not mention anything regarding the powerlines.

Pilot informed the ground crew that he was going to land in a specific field. He named the field specifically and the ground crew responded. He got the impression that the pilot knew the name of the farm where they were landing.

Mr. Spencer does not recall any accident details after the landing.

The pilot called to apologize and offered them an explanation as to the cause. He stated that the flap line broke or was dragged under the basket.

Mr. Spencer and his fiancé were

[REDACTED]