



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Eastern Region

Date: May 11, 2017
Person Contacted: Robert Howard
NTSB Accident Number: ERA17LA029

Narrative:

Mr. Robert Howard was contacted by phone on May 4, 2017, at 1308 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only. He confirmed he did receive my e-mail several months ago asking him to complete a passenger statement, but indicated that he had provided a statement to the FAA, and felt both agencies should be sharing information.

He indicated that he is a private pilot with airplane single engine land and instrument airplane ratings. The accident flight was his and his wife's first balloon flight. He also thought it was the first balloon flight for the other couple too.

He indicated that in advance of the flight, he and his wife attended the pilot briefing, and were told that the wind was expected to increase later in the morning.

The pilot needed to land, and the field he picked had a slight incline. He approached the upsloping field, and was burning in an effort to soften the landing, but the balloon landed hard. At touchdown, his wife was holding/securing her camera that was around her neck with one hand, and with her other hand, she was holding onto the top railing of the basket. The wind grabbed the balloon, and dragged it an estimated 100 feet.

He was asked if he thought his wife would have been injured if she was holding onto handles inside the basket. He thought regardless of what she was holding onto, she likely would have been injured. His wife had a cast on her broken wrist for 6 weeks, and her back is still hurting.

He was asked if he thought the pilot briefing was adequate. He indicated that in hind-sight, he felt the briefing did not adequately describe what to expect on landing, although the pilot verbalized what to expect. He added that being a pilot himself, it would not be possible to brief every scenario.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on May 4, 2017, at 1359 EDT. He replied on May 5, 2017, at 1125 EDT with, “hi tim, i read the attachment, short sweet and accurate...bob.”