

MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

Eric Alleyne
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National Transportation Safety Board Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

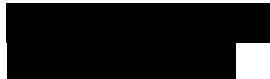
NTSB Case Number: ERA17LA243

Subject: FAA Statement

I spoke to the pilot, Mr. Jack Wheeler this morning. His account of that day matches his Crew Chief (and wife) Gina Wheeler. They are both going to provide me a statement of what had happened. The following are my notes of our conversation. After a successful landing at a farm in Murfreesboro, TN, the passengers disembarked the basket and held onto it to maintain negative buoyancy while the pilot let out the air. Two of the passengers bend down to grab the maneuvering handle and the balloon gained positive buoyancy. The 2 passengers let go of the basket but the third (Mr. Ian Stanaway) did not. The balloon went between 20 and 30 feet and Mr. Stanaway fell breaking his hip. The balloon came back down for final rest.

The operator has been advised not to have contact with Mr. Stanaway. All contact must go through the attorneys. I asked for his contact information but they said they no longer had it. I tried google searching Physical Therapist in Chattanooga, TN. Two of the numbers had busy signals and the third was a company he had worked at 5 years ago. I have not made contact with him at this point. In my opinion, the flight was complete and the passengers disembarked. The fact they were holding onto the basket to keep it on the ground made them ground crew and no longer passengers. I believe this to be an incident and not an accident. Had Mr. Stanaway still been onboard the basket or somehow tangled while disembarking it would be an accident.

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