



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Passenger Statement

Peter Wentz
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: July 21, 2021
Person Contacted: Emily Blake (Passenger)
Contact # [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA290

Narrative:

The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the individual named above:

Ms. Blake stated that her family had arranged a balloon ride leaving Post Mills Airport (2B9), Post Mills, Vermont on Friday, July 16th. She stated that about 45 minutes into the flight, the balloon started descending and the pilot told the passengers that the pilot light had extinguished, and he needed to change the propane tanks. She said that after the tanks were switched, the pilot started feeling along the side of the balloon basket in pockets next to her. She asked what he was looking for and he told her he could not find the striker to re-light the burner. She stated the pilot searched for many minutes and finally he located the backup striker. He held the striker in one hand and used his teeth to open the plastic bag holding the striker. She stated that the pilot was able to re-light the burner but that the balloon basket was very close to the ground and within 30 seconds or the less, the basket hit the ground in an open field. The basket turned about 90° to the ground as she watched her mother get thrown out of the basket onto the ground followed by the pilot landing on top of her mother. The balloon basket scooted along the ground and then started to rise. As the basket left the ground Ms. Blake stated the pilot's foot was pinned between the basket support next to the railing and the rope that ran from the bottom of the basket up to the balloon attach point. The pilot eventually untangled his foot but remained hanging below the basket. The balloon flew for about 1 mile before the pilot fell from the balloon to a field near the Connecticut river. The remaining passengers contacted the balloon ground support personnel via a handheld radio and received instructions on how to operate the balloon controls in preparation for landing. The balloon subsequently landed in trees.