

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription May 16, 2014

On Sunday, May 11, 2013, this agent interviewed TIMOTHY ALVAREZ, Date of Birth [REDACTED] ALVEREZ resides at [REDACTED] Ruther Glen, VA 22546, and his telephone number is [REDACTED]

On May 11, 2013, ALVAREZ came to the State Police Command Post located in the Caroline Pines Subdivision located in Caroline County, VA to provide photographs of the Hot Air Balloon crash. This agent obtained an SD card from the Nikon Coolpics camera that ALVAREZ had used to photograph the incident. The photographs from ALVAREZ' SD card were saved onto a disk by this agent.

This agent reviewed the photographs prior to interviewing ALVAREZ. Several of the photographs taken by ALVAREZ show a portion of the hot air balloon basket on fire. Photographs also show one male occupant believed to be the pilot, DAN KIRK, standing on the edge of the balloon's basket. Photographs also show one female occupant believed to be Ginny Doyle leaning headfirst out of the balloon's basket.

After reviewing the photographs, this agent interviewed ALVAREZ who stated that he had been following the balloons from his vehicle when he pulled into a field located on Ruther Glen Road. ALVAREZ exited his vehicle, and he saw the basket portion of the hot air balloon strike power lines located near some trees parallel to Ruther Glen Road. ALVAREZ explained that as soon as the basket struck the power lines, he saw sparks and heard what he described as an "electrical sound." ALVAREZ stated that the basket immediately ignited into flames, and he then heard what he believed a female voice shout, "I am going to die, what do I do." He believed it was the woman that was hanging from the edge of the basket. During the entire incident, ALVAREZ only saw two occupants in the balloon's basket. ALVAREZ continued to take pictures as the balloon rapidly rose into the sky. He estimated the balloon to be 30 feet from the ground when it struck the power lines, and he also estimated that it quickly rose between 200 to 300 feet after striking the power lines. The last thing that ALVAREZ saw was one of the occupants fall from the basket. ALVAREZ stated that he then turned away unable to watch any further and this was when he stopped taking any more photographs.

The photographs downloaded from ALVEREZ'S SD have been copied onto a CD and have been placed into a 1A file attached to this case.

Investigation on May 11, 2014 at Caroline County File # 14-81-02-0678

by Special Agent William H. Ticho III [REDACTED] Date dictated 5-16-2014

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription May 16, 2014

On Sunday, May 11, 2014, DANIEL COOPER, came to the State Police Command Post located at the Caroline Pines Subdivision located in Caroline County, VA, to provide his eyewitness account of the hot air balloon crash that occurred on May 9, 2014.

DANIEL COOPER, DOB [REDACTED] Lane, Ruther Glen, VA 22546, Phone Number [REDACTED] was interviewed by State Police Sergeant Anthony J. Puckett, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Air Safety Investigator Heidi Moates, and this agent. COOPER stated that between 7:30 P.M. and 7:40 P.M., he had been taking video of the hot air balloons. COOPER stated that he saw balloons come over his house, and thought they were going to land in a field beside another balloon that had landed. COOPER said that he thought the balloon was too low and was going to strike the power lines. COOPER stated he saw someone in the balloon point at the power lines. COOPER then saw someone "hit the burner," but the balloon hit the power lines and immediately caught fire. COOPER heard a female yelling, "Help me, help me." When the balloon struck the power lines, COOPER said he stopped video recording.

Investigation on May 11, 2014 at Caroline County File # 14-81-02-6078
by Special Agent William H. Ticho III [REDACTED] Date dictated 5-16-2014 -4

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription May 14, 2014

On Saturday, May 10, 2014, this agent interviewed Lieutenant JOSEPH CROWDER of the Caroline County Sheriff's Office, DOB [REDACTED] at the Virginia State Police Command Post located at Caroline Pines Subdivision in Caroline County, VA.

CROWDER was one of two passengers on a hot air balloon piloted by Randy Lee. The balloon he was riding in had landed in a field along Ruther Glen Road.

CROWDER stated that he was out of the balloon assisting the pilot with packing up as he saw another balloon that was on fire.

CROWDER explained that the basket portion of the balloon was on fire and the balloon was rising rapidly.

CROWDER heard a very loud "boom" as the balloon rose over the tree tops along the opposite end of the field.

This agent asked CROWDER if he observed anything out of the ordinary prior to the incident. CROWDER stated that he had not.

This agent asked CROWDER if he observed any weather conditions specifically high winds during his balloon flight, and CROWDER stated that he had not.

This agent concluded the interview with CROWDER and provided him with this agent's contact information.

Investigation on May 10, 2014 at Caroline County File # 14-81-02-0018
by Special Agent Willia H. Ticho III [REDACTED] Date dictated 05-14-2014



VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/12/14

On May 12, 2014, the reporting agent spoke with JOE DOYLE, [REDACTED] DOYLE was informed of the identity of the reporting agent and the reason for the interview.

DOYLE stated that his sister, VIRGINIA DOYLE, was given a free ticket to ride a hot air balloon at MEADOW EVENT PARK located in Caroline County, Virginia. He stated that he was unsure of specific day he last spoke to VIRGINIA DOYLE. He stated that his sister did send a tweet from Twitter on May 9, 2014. DOYLE stated that at no time did VIRGINIA DOYLE ever speak about committing suicide or have any emotional issues. To the best of his knowledge, VIRGINIA DOYLE, was not taking any medication in regards to mental health. DOYLE stated that his sister loved her job and community and was a very good athlete.

Investigation on 5/12/2014 at Richmond, VA File # 14-81-02-067E

by S/A J. M. Gunderson [REDACTED] Date dictated 05/12/2014 -18

[REDACTED] 5-12-14

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/11/14

On May 10, 2014 an interview was conducted with Karen HAYES, DOB of [REDACTED] and telephone # of [REDACTED]. The interview was conducted at Ms. HAYES' residence located at [REDACTED] Alexandria, VA 22314. Conducting the interview was SSA Christopher E. Blosser. Prior to the interview HAYES was made aware of the agents identity and the purpose of the interview. HAYES provided the following information:

Ms. HAYES attended the balloon event in Doswell on Friday, May 9, 2014, arriving at the location around 1450 hours. She was scheduled to take a ride in a balloon piloted by Matt Lidinsky. She was also in the balloon with her friend Lise KUPKE who joined her from Washington, DC. HAYES said the balloons were supposed to begin the flights around 1800 but there had been delays, test balloons had been launched and there seemed to be some concern regarding the wind. She said around 1830 balloons began launching with hers being the last of 13 to take off. She described the flight as smooth and it did not feel as if the wind was taking them quickly or causing any problems with the flight.

She was taking photos and some video when all aboard noticed one of the balloons in the distance that appeared to be on fire. HAYES said she captured video of the balloon on fire and then a fireball dislodged and she saw it quickly drop to the ground and then the remaining portion of the balloon went really high with a small fire on it. She said the pilot called Henry ROSENBAUM on his cell phone and was told they already had reports of the situation. HAYES said they then landed on a farm shortly after this.

HAYES called the tip line because she felt her video may provide a better prespective due to them being airborne and some distance away.

She said she had not released the video to any media outlets but had sent it to a couple of friends.

Investigation on May 10, 2014 at Alexandria, VA File # 14-81.02-0078

by SSA Christopher E. Blosser [REDACTED] Date dictated 5/11/2014 -9

[REDACTED] 8-14

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/14/14

DAWN HOWETH, [REDACTED] Tappahannock, VA 22560, date of birth [REDACTED] was interviewed in regard to the balloon accident that occurred on 5/9/14 in Caroline County. HOWETH was advised of the identity of the reporting agent and the reason for the interview. This interview was conducted at her residence at approximately 10:00 a.m.

SA J. E. GANZHORN asked, "Where did you observe the balloon from?" HOWETH stated, "I was in front of the front arena. We were sitting at the picnic tables facing the Farm Bureau Building. The vendors were behind us, and the band was to the right of us." GANZHORN asked, "What made you attend the event?" HOWETH stated, "It was girls night out, and it was my first time there." GANZHORN asked, "Did you know the pilot or the passengers?" HOWETH stated, "No, I did not know them." GANZHORN asked, "Did you call anyone when the balloon accident occurred?" HOWETH stated, "I called my husband to tell him what was going on." GANZHORN asked, "Do you remember the timeline of events?" HOWETH stated, "I took the first picture at 7:40 p.m. I don't think I have any pictures of the fire." GANZHORN asked, "Did you see the balloon hit the power lines?" HOWETH stated, "I did not see."

HOWETH then emailed her photos and videos of the event to this agent.

Investigation on 5/13/14 at Tappahannock File # 14-81-02-0018
 by SA J. E. Ganzhorn [REDACTED] Date dictated 5/14/14 -21

[REDACTED]
5-14

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/28/14

On May 10, 2014, the reporting agent spoke with JANICE KIRK, DOB [REDACTED] SSN [REDACTED] residing at [REDACTED] located in Hartly, DE, [REDACTED]. KIRK was informed of the identity of the reporting agent and the reason for the interview.

KIRK stated that her and her husband, DANIEL KIRK, were part of the hot air balloon community. She stated that her husband is well know with other balloonist. On May 9, 2014, she and her husband arrived at Meadow Event Park with the intentions of flying that morning. The flight was canceled and rescheduled for that afternoon. She stated that her husband took NATALIE LEWIS and VIRGINIA DOYLE with him on the afternoon of May 9, 2014. She stated that prior to departure, she went over all safety guidelines and had both females fill out a Starship Adventures, LLC passenger information sheet. The sheet also asks the passengers to sign a waiver, release, and hold harmless agreement (see attached). She stated that LEWIS and DOYLE then boarded the gondola with her husband. KIRK informed that her husband then went over the safety guidelines once again. She then boarded her vehicle with radio in hand to receive communication between herself and her husband piloting the hot air balloon. Her husband's last communication with her was to drive toward Carmel Church. She stated that she tried several times to radio her husband back but never received a response. She stated that she never received a distress call from her husband or the passengers. She was informed by other balloonist that her husband's balloon was seen on fire.

KIRK stated that her husband has flown in Ashland, Virginia in the past but did not know if he had flown in Caroline County. She informed he has been flying hot air balloons since 1981. She informed he had never spoke about committing suicide or harming others. She stated her husband was not taking any medication in regards to mental health only blood pressure medicine. She informed her husband was admitted into the hospital back in March of this year for major headaches and thought he was having blood pressure issues. She stated that his doctors found a small brain bleed in the back part of his brain. He was placed on new blood pressure medicine, lost 30lbs, and cleared to fly in April 2014 by his doctors.

Investigation on 5/10/2014 at Richmond, VA File # 14-81-02-0078

by S/A J. M. Gunderson [REDACTED] Date dictated 05/28/2014 -10

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/10/14

On May 10, 2014, the reporting agent spoke with EVAN LEWIS, DOB [REDACTED] residing at [REDACTED] LEWIS was informed of the identity of the reporting agent and the reason for the interview.

LEWIS stated that his daughter, NATALIE LEWIS, was given a free ticket to ride a hot air balloon at MEADOW EVENT PARK located in Caroline County, Virginia. He stated that NATALIE LEWIS' finance was the last to speak with her at 0830 and receive a text from her at 1908. LEWIS stated that at no time did NATALIE LEWIS ever speak about committing suicide or have any emotional issues. NATALIE LEWIS was not taking any medication in regards to mental health. LEWIS stated that she was in the process of planning her future with her finance, MICHAEL.

Investigation on 5/10/2014 at Richmond, VA File # 14-81-02-061E

by S/A J. M. Gunderson [REDACTED] Date dictated 05/10/2014 -11

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the Virginia State Police. It is the property of the Virginia State Police and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

[REDACTED] 25-14

VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

Date of Transcription 5/12/14

TERESA LYNN SHULTZ, [REDACTED] McKenney, VA 23872, phone number [REDACTED] was interviewed at the Area 07 State Police office in Dinwiddie County on May 11, 2014 at 1111 hours. SHULTZ's husband, SCOTT SHULTZ, [REDACTED] was present as well. SHULTZ was made aware of the identity of the reporting agent and the reason for the interview.

SHULTZ goes by the name of "Lynn" and stated the following information:

She is a photographer and her husband purchased two tickets for them to attend the balloon festival in Caroline County on Friday, May 9th, 2014. She was not hired by anyone there and did not know anyone at the event. While there she began taking numerous photos using her Nikon D5000 camera with a 300mm lens. SHULTZ stated the first wave of balloons took off with no issues. The balloon that caught on fire she referred to as the "Support our Troops" balloon since it had those words written on it. She thought it appeared as if it were operated by "Eagle Balloons".

Using the time stamps on the photos and the numbering of the pictures according to the camera, SHULTZ pointed out the following along with her comments which she thought may be helpful: (all dates were May 9th, 2014 and the comments are those of SHULTZ and not the reporting agent)

7:16PM-balloon in question starts getting filled

7:20PM-balloon almost fully inflated

7:21PM-balloon appears to be approximately 4 feet off the ground, there is a white female wearing a black shirt taking pictures with what appears to be her cell phone, to the left of her is a man wearing a red shirt appearing to be the balloon's pilot, and to her right slightly out of view is another female wearing a red shirt. All three individuals were in the balloon's basket, which appeared to be a square wicker basket.

#149: This picture looks like the balloon was in front of the cables on top of the Farm Bureau building but it's more than likely behind those cables.

#154: The balloon appears to be very low behind the Farm Bureau building. The balloon to the left took off at the same time and he was already much higher.

Investigation on 5/11/2014 at Dinwiddie County File # 14-81-02-0618

by SA J.P. Houlberg [REDACTED] Date dictated _____

#161: 7:24PM, the balloon still appears extremely low, appearing to have lost altitude after taking off. SHULTZ stated she was still close enough to the balloon and did not hear anything coming from the balloon in terms of distress or suspicion that something was wrong

#170: 7:25PM, the balloon is higher again, appears to be starting to take off again and is the same altitude as the other balloons in the same wave

#188: the third wave of balloons were in the air and the fourth wave was getting ready

#230: 7:55PM, SHULTZ stated she was just shooting pictures of clouds in the sky and saw the balloon in question come into sight. The balloon's basket was on fire and there appeared to be debris falling. SHULTZ also stated she had the camera's 300mm lens at full zoom

#231: SHULTZ estimated the balloon to be about 2 ½ to 3 miles away and appeared to be deflating, the basket appeared to be fully engulfed

#234: 7:58PM, the right had side of the balloon appears deflated

#237: the fire in the basket appears much brighter than the previous pictures

#239: balloon appears to have a normal shape again

#245: 7:59PM, black smoke appears to be coming from the balloon

#246: the right side of the balloon appears to be burning

#247: 8:00PM, the balloon is almost out of view of the camera's lens, the basket appears to be hanging by one side only

#248: 8:01PM, this was the last photo taken of the balloon

SHULTZ advised the reporting agent that the zoomed in photos of the balloon were cropped so the balloon could be the focal point of the image but the images were not enhanced. She and her husband called the local CBS news station on the night of May 9th, 2014 and provided copies of images to them. She also did an audio interview with CNN the morning of May 10, 2014.

SHULTZ's husband drew a diagram of the event's area and she stated the balloon was directly behind the Farm Bureau building and guessed it would have been about 3 to 5 miles out, so there was no way to hear anything that was coming from the balloon.

SHULTZ provided the reporting agent a copy of all the photos she took that day, which are included in a 1A envelope.

This concluded the interview.