



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TUCSON, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX87LA120
Date & Time:	February 22, 1987, 10:30 Local	Registration:	N4261R
Aircraft:	RAVEN S-55A	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

DURING A PLEASURE FLIGHT, THE PILOT REPORTED THAT UPON TAKE-OFF, THE WIND WAS CALM. WHILE IN-FLIGHT THE WIND INCREASED AND THE PILOT PREPARED FOR A HIGH WIND LANDING. THE BALLOON TOUCHED-DOWN HARD AND HIT A BUSH. THE PILOT AND ONE PASSENGER WERE EJECTED FROM THE GONDOLA. THE BALLOON BECAME AIRBORNE THEN TOUCHED-DOWN A SECOND TIME APPROXIMATELY 50 YARDS FROM THE INITIAL IMPACT. THE PILOT'S FLT TIME WAS NOT REPORTED/NOT AVAILABLE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

- Findings
1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH WIND
 2. (F) WIND INFORMATION - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION

Occurrence #3: HARD LANDING

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	57, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	RAVEN	Registration:	N4261R
Model/Series:	S-55A S-55A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	S-55A-1052
Landing Gear Type:	Hull	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 11, 1986 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1435 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	42 Hrs	Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	180 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	PITRAT, CALUDE H.	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	TUS ,2630 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	09:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	80°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	TUCSON , AZ	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Snow
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eckrote, Debra
Additional Participating Persons:	DAN LEER; SCOTTSDALE , AZ
Original Publish Date:	March 21, 1988
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25524

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).