

Photographer Charged In Paragliding Incident

A National Geographic photographer and a paragliding instructor have been charged with criminal trespass for allegedly entering a local feedyard without permission on June 28. According to a press release from Finney County Attorney Susan Richmeier, George Steinmetz, 55, Glenn Ridge, N.J., and Wei Zhang, 39, Beijing, China, were charged Thursday in Finney County District Court for allegedly entering Brookover Ranch without permission. Criminal trespass is a class B nonperson misdemeanor. A Brookover employee had reported that the pair were parked on private property at the ranch, said Finney County Sheriff Kevin Bascue. "... They drove onto Brookover Ranch land, where it's clearly posted, 'No Trespassing,'" Bascue said. Bascue said the employee reported that Zhang was standing next to a vehicle as Steinmetz flew a paraglider over a feedlot at Brookover taking photographs. Richmeier said she wanted to clarify that the arrests and subsequent charges stemmed from the photographer and paraglider entering private property without permission and didn't center on the right to air space. According to Bascue, when the employee approached Zhang, Zhang drove the vehicle south and off of Brookover property, where Steinmetz later landed the paraglider. "We made contact with the subjects when they landed, at which time we called the property owner to ask if he wanted to press charges, and he said, 'yes,'" Bascue said. "We then arrested the subjects for criminal trespass." Steinmetz is known for photographing the world's deserts while piloting a motorized paraglider. Many of his photographs have been published in National Geographic magazine. His trip to Garden City was part of his work on a series about food that will be

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