

SUMMIT 1- UNIT 9- LISTENING- PAGE 106, EXERCISE B

Part 1

On October 15, 2009, a**1** story caught the media's attention worldwide. In the state of Colorado in the western United States, a six-year-old boy named Falcon Heene had somehow taken off in a hot-air**2** and was drifting helplessly across the sky. The balloon, which was shaped like a silver-colored**3**, was reported to be traveling at an altitude of more than 2,000 meters, and the public was alarmed. Richard Heene, the boy's father—who had built the balloon— said he was handling it when he accidentally**4** and it floated off. When Heene and his wife realized that Falcon was missing—and when Falcon's brother said he had seen Falcon climb into the box that was attached to the balloon, they were very frightened and called for help. Police and TV news helicopters raced to catch up with the balloon while emergency vehicles followed on the ground. Non-stop TV news programs interviewed**5** to discuss how to stop the balloon and save the boy. On the Internet, bloggers and members of**6**.sites referred to Falcon as Balloon Boy, and their posts were filled with speculation about what had happened. More people used Google to search for "Balloon Boy" that day than for any other topic. And the events were a source of discussion at schools, workplaces, and dinner tables. The balloon traveled for almost 100 kilometers toward the city of Denver, and the Denver airport was closed down. The balloon finally landed on the ground, after having flown for about two hours. But when emergency vehicles got to the balloon, the boy wasn't there. The police searched all over, worried that he**7** out of the balloon during the flight. Someone had even reported seeing something fall from it while it was high in the air. News programs reported the events as they happened, and their viewers worried about the boy's fate. But later that afternoon everyone was surprised to discover that the boy**8**.hiding in a cardboard box in a room above the garage at his home. He said that he had been hiding because his father was angry with him. Everyone was greatly relieved that the incident hadn't ended in tragedy but instead had had a happy ending.

Part 2

After the good news, the family appeared on TV for**9**. On CNN, Falcon was asked why he had stayed in the garage that whole day. Falcon turned to his parents and responded, "You guys said that, um, we did this for the show." And on two other programs the next day, when interviewers asked his father about that statement, Falcon got nauseous and vomited—on TV—clearly very nervous about the whole affair. News agencies began to be**10** that perhaps the event had been a**11** after all, and the police and other local government authorities began to**12**. One thing authorities discovered was that the balloon could not have carried the weight of a child—so the claim that Falcon was in it**13** true. More information was discovered about

Falcon's father. He was a storm chaser, a**14**, and thought of himself as a part-time scientist; he had designed the balloon as an experimental model for an alternative type of transportation.

He had a strong interest in mysteries and conspiracies. He was also a part-time actor who regularly proposed ideas for new TV shows—for example, one in which he would explore wacky scientific**15**. He even had an idea for a reality show featuring his own family. Later, Falcon's mother, Mayumi, finally admitted she had known that her son was hiding in their home, and that both parents had instructed their children not to tell the truth to the police or news media. Police finally determined that the event had actually been nothing more than a**16**; Richard Heene thought it would help get his family on TV for that reality show. Early estimates placed the cost of the rescue attempt at about \$2 million U.S. dollars. In the end, Falcon's parents agreed to repay \$36,000. In addition, Richard Heene spent 90 days in prison, was required to do 100 hours of community service, and had to write a**17** to the police. Mayumi Heene spent 20 days in prison. The Heenes finally sold the balloon for \$2,500 and donated that money to victims of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Many people noted that most TV reporters had presented the story as true right from the beginning, even though there were clear questions about whether or not the boy was even in the balloon. Some reported that Falcon had fallen out of the balloon, without having confirmed that information either. Some critics also questioned the judgment of providing live TV**18** of the balloon when a six-year-old child could**19** falling to his death. In the end, many concluded that competition among**20** to report this moving story caused many to focus on being first instead of getting the story right.