

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO) \*

NATURAL GAS RELEASE WITH IGNITION \* Docket No.: DCA-14-MP-001

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA \*

DECEMBER 17, 2013 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DARRYLE BROWN

Offices of Glenda Cochran Associates  
Birmingham, Alabama

Thursday,  
July 17, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON  
Investigator-in-Charge

## APPEARANCES:

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, D.C. 20594

RAVI CHHATRE, Accident Investigator  
Pipeline Division  
National Transportation Safety Board

BOB GARDNER, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance  
Alabama Gas Corporation (Alagasco)  
(Party Representative)

NANCY McATEE, Fire and Explosion Specialist  
National Transportation Safety Board

KEITH BLACKWOOD, Pipeline Safety Investigator  
Alabama Public Service Commission

MATT MONEYHAM, Esq.  
GLENDA COCHRAN, Esq.  
(Representatives on behalf of Mr. Brown)

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## I N T E R V I E W

MR. NICHOLSON: Good morning. Today is Thursday, July 17, 2014. My name is Matthew Nicholson. I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, D.C. We are at the Glenda Cochran & Associates law firm in Birmingham, Alabama, for the interview of Mr. Darryle Brown. This is case number DCA-14-MP-001.

This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public docket. We'll now go around the room and have each person state their name with spelling, title, and an agency or organization that you're representing. I will start and we'll proceed to my right.

My name is Matthew Nicholson, spelled M-a-t-t-h-e-w, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n. I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre. That's R-a-v-i,  
C-h-h-a-t-r-e. I'm an accident investigator in Pipeline Division,  
National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. GARDNER: Bob Gardner, Alagasco. Last name spelling G-a-r-d-n-e-r. I'm the director of quality assurance and compliance for Alagasco and also the party representative.

MS. McATEE: Nancy McAtee, N-a-n-c-y, M-c-A-t-e-e. I'm  
a firearm explosion specialist with the National Transportation

1 Safety Board.

2 MR. BLACKWOOD: Keith Blackwood, K-e-i-t-h,  
3 B-l-a-c-k-w-o-o-d, pipeline safety investigator, Alabama Public  
4 Service Commission.

5 MR. MONEYHAM: Matt Moneyham, M-a-t-t, M-o-n-e-y-h-a-m,  
6 with Glenda Cochran & Associates. I'm an attorney for Mr. Darryle  
7 Brown.

8 MR. BROWN: My name is Darryle Brown, D-a-r-r-y-l-e.

9 MS. COCHRAN: And I'm Glenda Cochran, G-l-e-n-d-a,  
10 C-o-c-h-r-a-n, Glenda Cochran Associates.

11 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Terrific.

12 INTERVIEW OF DARRYLE BROWN

13 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

14 Q. So, Darryle, just to get started, I think we'd start  
15 with some basic background information, if we could. Can you just  
16 tell us what your -- the address was and unit number at Marks  
17 Village that you were staying on December 17, 2013?

18 A. I don't remember the address. I know it's unit 80.

19 Q. Okay. And can you tell us approximately when you moved  
20 into the Marks Village complex?

21 A. No, I can't tell you right offhand.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know a year?

23 A. No. I've been there 2 years.

24 Q. Oh, you've been there about 2 years?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. Okay. Two years prior to the accident?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay. And was Marks Village your permanent address?

4 Was that where you stayed -- your primary address of --

5 A. (No audible response.)

6 Q. Okay, residence. Okay.

7 Okay, can we -- I'd like to go to the layout, if we  
8 could, that you've got in front of you, and maybe have you -- can  
9 you identify for us -- I just want to kind of capture where some  
10 of the appliances would have been in that apartment unit, as you  
11 recall, to the best of your recollection. Maybe could you label  
12 on that diagram like bedrooms, who was staying in which bedroom,  
13 where the beds were in your bedroom, and I think there were some  
14 other appliances in the kitchen. I believe there was a freezer?  
15 Can you identify where those, those types of equipment were for  
16 us?

17 A. With the pen right here?

18 Q. Yeah, feel free to mark on that, please.

19 MR. MONEYHAM: You want to move your --

20 MS. COCHRAN: Well, it's -- Darryle was right-hand  
21 dominant so --

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Or I can do it for you or --

23 MS. COCHRAN: Are you going to try to do this with your  
24 left hand?

25 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

1 MS. COCHRAN: Or let Matt do it for you?

2 MR. MONEYHAM: You point to me and I'll do it. Is that  
3 okay with you all?

4 MR. NICHOLSON: That's fine. That's perfectly fine.  
5 Yeah.

6 MR. BROWN: You want to know where the furniture was,  
7 all the furniture?

8 MS. COCHRAN: What do you want to know?

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, any large appliances, bedroom --  
10 where the beds were oriented in the bedrooms and who was staying  
11 in each of the bedrooms, would be helpful information for us. So  
12 we could start with the kitchen --

13 MS. COCHRAN: Start with this --

14 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

15 Q. -- or your bedroom. That's fine.

16 A. It was a oven here, a stove right here.

17 Q. Okay. I think we have --

18 A. A sink right here. It's a deep freezer right here by  
19 the door right here.

20 MR. MONEYHAM: Refrigerator?

21 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

22 MS. COCHRAN: A freezer did you say?

23 MR. BROWN: A deep freezer.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Deep freezer. Yeah, okay.

25 MR. BROWN: The deep freezer and the refrigerator were

1 next to each other.

2 MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

3 MR. MONEYHAM: Which one was which?

4 MR. BROWN: This the deep freezer right here.

5 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay.

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

7 MR. BROWN: The kitchen table right here.

8 MR. MONEYHAM: Here?

9 MR. BROWN: Yeah, right here, by the back door.

10 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay. Was it square or round?

11 MR. BROWN: Square. And the other side had a dryer.

12 MR. MONEYHAM: Was there a washer?

13 MR. BROWN: Was there what?

14 MR. MONEYHAM: Was there a washer?

15 MR. BROWN: Yeah. A washer and a dryer.

16 MR. MONEYHAM: Were they all on top of one another?

17 MR. BROWN: Uh-uh. The washer was on -- the washer was

18 over this way.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: That sounds right, because he did have

20 water connections there.

21 MR. BROWN: And the dryer was over this way.

22 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: And that's a clothes washer, not a

24 dishwasher, correct?

25 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.



1 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Can you put clothes under --

2 MR. MONEYHAM: Um-hum.

3 MR. NICHOLSON: -- right on --

4 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

5 Q. And what about the living room, was there anything else  
6 in there?

7 A. In the living room, it was a heater right here. I  
8 think, a sofa right here.

9 MR. MONEYHAM: Against the --

10 MR. BROWN: Um-hum. The front of the table was in front  
11 of the window. No. Let's see. It was a sofa right over -- yeah,  
12 that's right, that's right, because the couch was right there.

13 BY: MR. NICHOLSON:

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. I don't know, I think the other one on the wall.

16 MS. COCHRAN: The what, Darryle?

17 MR. BROWN: The other little, whatever, what they call  
18 it?

19 MR. MONEYHAM: Love seat?

20 MR. BROWN: Yeah. The love seat's on the wall.

21 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay. Over here?

22 MR. BROWN: Um-hum, on the wall. And she had some table  
23 that was so tall (indiscernible).

24 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

25 Q. Yeah. It doesn't have to be exact. We're just trying

1 to get some of the bigger pieces. Was there a TV in there  
2 Darryle, anywhere?

3 A. Uh-uh.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Uh-uh. No, there wasn't no TV in there.

6 Q. Any space heaters or fans?

7 A. The heater, the heater was right there.

8 Q. Okay.

9 MR. MONEYHAM: Any tables?

10 MR. BROWN: Yeah. It was like, let me see. I think it  
11 was one or -- it was two. I think it was one right there and one  
12 right here.

13 MR. MONEYHAM: I'll just write "tab."

14 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I think -- if you want to  
15 abbreviate.

16 MR. BROWN: That's about it for the living room. That  
17 was it.

18 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

19 Q. That's all for the living room? Okay.

20 A. There was a table in the middle.

21 Q. Oh, okay.

22 A. That was it though.

23 Q. How was the bed oriented in the bedroom?

24 A. Dresser right here.

25 MR. MONEYHAM: Dresser?

1           MR. BROWN: Yeah. A dresser and the TV was on top, on  
2 top -- the TV was on top of it. And she had one with the mirror  
3 on right beside it.

4           MR. MONEYHAM: Sorry. It's getting a little turned  
5 around. And the dresser?

6           MR. BROWN: Um-hum. Right in front of the bed. A bed  
7 over that way. And then a bed right here.

8           MR. MONEYHAM: This way?

9           MR. BROWN: Um-hum. And there was a, what do you call  
10 it, like dresser like what you put cups on top of.

11          MS. COCHRAN: A nightstand?

12          MR. BROWN: Yeah. A nightstand right there on the side  
13 of --

14          MS. COCHRAN: It was close to the bed, I think.

15          MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah. Wouldn't it be closer --

16          MS. COCHRAN: To the bed, Matt. Yeah.

17          MR. MONEYHAM: Okay.

18          MS. COCHRAN: Just put NS.

19          MR. NICHOLSON: That's it. That'll work.

20          MR. BROWN: Closet. And then that was it. Yes, that's  
21 it in the bedroom.

22          BY MR. NICHOLSON:

23          Q. That's it for that bedroom? Okay. Thanks. So, no fans  
24 or anything else in that room?

25          A. Um-hum. What's a fan now?

1 Q. Like, you know, like a little portable fan?

2 A. I think a fan was on the floor. Yeah, the fan was on  
3 the floor.

4 Q. Okay.

5 MR. MONEYHAM: Where was it? That way?

6 MR. BROWN: Yes, sitting on the floor though.

7 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

8 Q. Okay. And then it was winter. No heaters, little  
9 portable heaters, other than the -- okay. Good.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Was that a ceiling fan or portable fan?

11 MR. BROWN: One of them plug-up fans.

12 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

13 Q. Plug-in fan?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. Terrific. Good. So this was your bedroom?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Is that everything on the first floor?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Could we do the second floor as well?

20 MS. COCHRAN: This is where the stairs come up.

21 MR. MONEYHAM: Um-hum.

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah.

23 MR. BROWN: Okay. That was a kids' room.

24 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

25 Q. Okay. Which kid's room, is that?

1 A. Corey.

2 Q. Corey's?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Okay. Okay.

5 A. Denise, her mother, that's her room right there.

6 Q. Did you say Denise?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Antuan, his studio right there.

10 Q. Oh, studio? Is that what -- okay. Terrific. And then  
11 as far as furnishings, can we just rough-in maybe where the beds  
12 where and if they were any little electronic equipment, if they're  
13 large furniture pieces as best, you can remember?

14 A. He had a dresser, a long dresser, right there.

15 MR. MONEYHAM: Right here?

16 MR. BROWN: Um-hum. And a little nightstand up here.

17 Let me see. Okay, closet.

18 MS. COCHRAN: No, there's the closet.

19 MR. BROWN: Yeah. Let me see. I forget --

20 MR. MONEYHAM: Where was his bed?

21 MR. BROWN: His bed was like right here in the middle.

22 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

23 Q. Well, was it in the middle or did it touch the wall like  
24 he shows?

25 A. It was like in the middle touching the wall, like --

1 Q. Oh, okay. So he's got it correct there? Okay.

2 A. Okay. And then these beds was right there. The TV was  
3 right there.

4 MR. MONEYHAM: Which direction?

5 MR. BROWN: Right here when you come from -- when you  
6 come in right here.

7 MS. COCHRAN: But did it stick out this way?

8 MR. MONEYHAM: Did it, did it --

9 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

10 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay. If it was long-ways, did it go  
11 like this?

12 MR. BROWN: It was long-ways.

13 MS. COCHRAN: You mean this way?

14 MR. NICHOLSON: Towards the center of the room?

15 MR. BROWN: She didn't have no backboard.

16 MS. COCHRAN: Yeah. It went just like this.

17 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

18 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay.

19 MR. BROWN: And her TV right here. In Corey's room he  
20 had, let me see -- yeah. His bed right here.

21 MR. MONEYHAM: In the corner?

22 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

23 MS. COCHRAN: Where was the head of the --

24 MR. MONEYHAM: Running in this way or?

25 MR. BROWN: He didn't have no headboard either, so -- it

1 was right there by the door.

2 MS. COCHRAN: But, I mean, was it running this way or  
3 sticking --

4 MR. BROWN: It was --

5 MS. COCHRAN: -- sticking into the room?

6 MR. BROWN: Okay. You walk in his room, it's like to  
7 the left.

8 MS. COCHRAN: But was it like this or like this?

9 MR. BROWN: It was like this.

10 MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

11 MR. MONEYHAM: I can't -- I couldn't -- like --

12 MS. COCHRAN: That way.

13 MR. BROWN: Um-hum, like --

14 MS. COCHRAN: Yeah.

15 MR. NICHOLSON: So which side was -- where does his head  
16 go when he slept?

17 MS. COCHRAN: Here, right?

18 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

19 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

20 Q. Okay. So it came out into the center of the room?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. That was one of them old, big old beds.

24 Q. King size?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 MR. CHHATRE: I thought he said this way.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: I thought he did too, but he's --

3 MR. BROWN: Well, that's wrong. It's this way.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: But he said it's a very large bed.

5 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

6 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

7 Q. So the headboard's here. Is that what we're saying?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. His head was there and his feet were out here?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay. So that's accurate. And --

12 A. He had a dresser and a TV on top of it, and that would  
13 be right -- should have been right there by the bed.

14 MR. MONEYHAM: Right here?

15 MR. BROWN: Um-hum. And that's it.

16 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

17 Q. Okay. What was in that studio?

18 A. A computer.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. It was a computer, a lot of recording stuff. It was a  
21 computer, speakers, equipment in a box -- a speaker, a computer.  
22 I forgot the name of that little box that we had all the -- to  
23 open up a program.

24 MR. MONEYHAM: Where, was it on a table?

25 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.



1 MR. MONEYHAM: Where was that?

2 MR. BROWN: No. Like everything was on like a long  
3 table like this right there in the front of the window.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

5 MR. MONEYHAM: Right here?

6 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

7 MR. MONEYHAM: So like this?

8 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

9 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

10 Q. So it was a computer and some microphones maybe, mixing  
11 equipment?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Okay. So electronics?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 MR. MONEYHAM: I wrote, with computer and recording  
16 equipment.

17 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, that works.

18 MR. BROWN: And a couple of chairs. I think that was  
19 about it.

20 MS. COCHRAN: Okay. Is that where the chairs were?

21 MR. MONEYHAM: Like pulled up to the table?

22 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

23 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay.

24 MR. BROWN: That was it.

25 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

1 Q. Okay. And then up on this level were there any other  
2 little portable fans or little space heaters or any other kind of  
3 portable electronic?

4 A. (No audible response.)

5 Q. Okay. Terrific. How about in the storage, what were  
6 you guys keeping in the storage, anything?

7 A. Oh, she had --

8 Q. Just clothes?

9 A. -- it was a bunch of -- a mattress and I think AC units.

10 Q. I'm sorry, what unit?

11 A. AC units.

12 Q. Sure. A little AC, like a air conditioning unit?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 MR. NICHOLSON: What did you write there, Matt?

15 MR. MONEYHAM: Mattress and AC unit.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, a mattress and an AC unit. Okay.

17 MR. BROWN: Yeah, that was it.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I appreciate it. Thank you.

19 MR. CHHATRE: On the master bedroom, which way was the  
20 head and which way were the feet?

21 MR. BROWN: Right here?

22 MR. MONEYHAM: Um-hum.

23 MR. BROWN: The bed, right -- this the head right here.

24 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay. Do you want me to put --

25 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, we can mark that.

1 MR. MONEYHAM: Okay, that's --

2 MR. CHHATRE: That's good enough, yeah.

3 MR. NICHOLSON: Wonderful. Good. Thank you. That's  
4 very helpful, Darryle. I appreciate that.

5 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

6 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

7 Q. If you could, can you tell us your age?

8 A. Thirty-four.

9 Q. Thirty-four. Okay. Excellent. And your relationship  
10 to --

11 A. Fiancé.

12 Q. You were the fiancé of Ms. Mabry? Okay.

13 And then, going back to this map a little bit, we -- I'd  
14 like to label, just to be sure, what was the front door and what  
15 was the back door as far as exterior doors, and which one you used  
16 most frequently or people used most frequently to enter and exit?

17 A. The back.

18 MR. MONEYHAM: This is the back?

19 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

20 Q. Yeah. So parking would have been out here.

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. The cars? Okay. Calling that the back. Okay.

23 MR. MONEYHAM: And this is the front?

24 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

25 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

1 Q. And can you tell us which, which of the two would have  
2 been used most frequently by the kids and --

3 A. (No audible response.)

4 Q. Okay, the back. Can you make a note of that somehow,  
5 most frequent? Okay, terrific.

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, Ravi, you want to --

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. Yeah. Can you walk us through on the day of the  
9 accident how the day started in the morning and then walk us  
10 through until you went to bed?

11 A. I always get up -- they had to leave for school at like  
12 7. I get, I get up about like 6:30 or 6:45 and wake them up.

13 Q. Okay. And then what happened?

14 A. Then she'll get up. I get her up around about like 7,  
15 7:30.

16 Q. You know what time you left for work?

17 A. I leave, I leave for work around about like 7:45.

18 Q. 7:45 you left for work. Okay. Now, did you smell any  
19 gas odor in the morning?

20 A. In the morning?

21 Q. In the house?

22 A. In the house? No, sir.

23 Q. Okay. Now, in the morning if you use bathroom, did you  
24 smell any gas odor there in the bathroom?

25 A. (No audible response.)

1           Q.    Now, when you -- which door you use to go out of the  
2 house?

3           A.    The back.

4           Q.    Back door. Do you -- and you walked over the lawn to  
5 the curb? Where was your car parked?

6           A.    In the back.

7           Q.    Back. Did you smell any gas odor outside the house?

8           A.    Outside? Once or twice.

9           Q.    That day?

10          A.    Yeah.

11               MS. COCHRAN: No, he's asking you about that day.

12               MR. BROWN: Oh, he talking about that day?

13               MS. COCHRAN: He's asking you about a specific -- the  
14 day of the explosion.

15               MR. CHHATRE: The day of the explosion.

16               UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Day prior.

17               MR. NICHOLSON: Well, I, I think it would be the day  
18 prior, actually.

19               MS. COCHRAN: I'm sorry.

20               MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

21               MR. NICHOLSON: Because it -- the accident happened  
22 around 2:30 in the morning, I believe?

23               UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

24               MR. NICHOLSON: It was very early. So we're asking  
25 about the day prior, December 16th. I think it was a Monday.

1 When you left for work on Monday morning, the day before the  
2 accident, did you smell any gas, either inside or outside?

3 MR. BROWN: Not when I left there. When I went in the  
4 afternoon I get a whiff of it.

5 MR. NICHOLSON: In the afternoon?

6 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

7 MR. NICHOLSON: The day before. Okay. And so where  
8 would that have been? Outside the house, is that what you're  
9 saying? Take your time. I know we're going back a-ways, so --  
10 I've got a map that shows the house and the outside if you want to  
11 kind of refresh your memory. I don't know if we can scooch this  
12 closer.

13 MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

14 MR. NICHOLSON: And if you could point to where you  
15 thought you had --

16 MS. COCHRAN: What did you ask him? Which --

17 MR. CHHATRE: I was asking did he smell any gas odor  
18 outside the house as he left for work.

19 MS. COCHRAN: At any time or that -- or the day before?

20 MR. CHHATRE: No. That morning when --

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm confused as to whether you're  
22 talking about the day of or --

23 BY MR. CHHATRE:

24 Q. Okay, Monday morning, Monday morning when you left for  
25 work, did you smell any gas odor on the outside?

1           A.    I don't know.  I mean, when are we talking about?

2           Q.    No?

3           A.    I don't know.

4           Q.    Okay.  What time will you come back from work?

5           A.    What time what?

6           Q.    What time do you --

7           A.    What time?

8           Q.    What time did you come back from work on Monday evening?

9           A.    It depend, all depends.  It depend on what kind of stuff

10          we have to do at work.  I might get off 3:30 sometime.

11          Q.    No, on that day, on that Monday?

12          A.    On a Monday?

13               MR. MONEYHAM:  The day the explosion happened?

14               MR. BROWN:  I wasn't working at the time that I can

15          remember.

16               BY MR. CHHATRE:

17          Q.    Okay.  You do not work Mondays?

18               MS. COCHRAN:  He wasn't working, he said.

19               MR. BROWN:  I wasn't working.

20               MR. NICHOLSON:  On Monday, okay.

21               MR. CHHATRE:  Okay.

22               MR. NICHOLSON:  So you were at home all day?

23               MR. BROWN:  Well, I wasn't working at the time.

24               MR. NICHOLSON:  Okay.

25               BY MR. CHHATRE:

1 Q. I'm sorry. Can you repeat that?

2 A. I wasn't working at the time.

3 Q. Okay. You're not working at the time. So were you home  
4 on Monday all day?

5 A. What he saying, all day?

6 MS. COCHRAN: Were you in the house all day the day  
7 before the explosion? Because the explosion happened early in the  
8 morning, Darryle.

9 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

10 MS. COCHRAN: So you were home?

11 MR. CHHATRE: You're at home.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: He's shaking his head, yes, just for the  
13 record. Okay.

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. So what kind of work you do?

16 A. The kind of work I was doing?

17 Q. What --

18 MS. COCHRAN: Yes. He can't work now, obviously.

19 MR. CHHATRE: No, no, I mean at --

20 MS. COCHRAN: Where were you working before the  
21 accident, is what he's asking you?

22 MR. BROWN: Birmingham Recycle.

23 MR. MONEYHAM: Birmingham Recycling.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Birmingham Recycling. Okay.

25 BY MR. CHHATRE:



1 Q. And what are your normal work hours before the accident?

2 A. Mostly like an 8, 9-hour shift.

3 Q. Okay. On which days?

4 A. When I was working, it was Monday through Saturday.

5 Q. Monday through Saturday.

6 MR. NICHOLSON: But you just -- I thought we just said  
7 you weren't working Monday, right?

8 MR. BROWN: No, he said when I was working.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: I got you. Thank you for that. Yeah.

10 BY MR. CHHATRE:

11 Q. So just for clarify in my mind, I want to make sure, on  
12 Monday of the accident you were not working that day?

13 A. I wasn't working.

14 Q. Okay. Now, did you go outside the house that day at any  
15 time at all on Monday before the accident?

16 A. Uh-uh.

17 Q. No. Did your fiancée left for work that day?

18 A. Uh-uh.

19 Q. Does she work outside the house, your fiancé?

20 A. Uh-uh.

21 Q. Okay. Did anybody in the family left the house to go  
22 outside that day on Monday, the day before the accident?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. What about the children?

25 MS. COCHRAN: The kids went to school, right?

1 MR. BROWN: Yeah, that the only time.

2 MS. COCHRAN: Um-hum. So, don't -- quit worrying about  
3 this. He's not asking -- you're studying this map and he's not  
4 asking you anything to do about the map.

5 BY MR. CHHATRE:

6 Q. So did the children go to school that day on Monday?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. What time did they go to school?

9 A. They went around about like 7 --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- 7:30, somewhere up in there.

12 Q. Okay. And what time did they come back from school?

13 A. They come back from school at like, maybe like 3:30 or  
14 4:00.

15 Q. Did you talk to the children after they came back from  
16 school, like how the school was or anything like that?

17 A. Yeah. I always ask them how their day was.

18 Q. I'm sorry, I didn't hear.

19 A. I ask them how their day was.

20 Q. Okay. And did they say anything about a gas odor? Did  
21 they complain about a gas odor?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. So what time do you -- do you cook that day at  
24 home?

25 A. That day? No, we didn't cook that day.

1 Q. The food was not cooked that date?

2 A. Uh-uh.

3 Q. So did you eat outside? Do you go --

4 A. Eat outside? What do you mean?

5 Q. Well, how do you -- if you did not cook food that day,  
6 how -- what do you eat that night?

7 A. I believe they went out to eat, I believe, went up the  
8 street, because they got a -- something up the street.

9 Q. I'm sorry. Can you repeat that? I'm sorry, I didn't  
10 hear.

11 A. You said what they eat that day?

12 Q. Yeah?

13 A. I don't know what they ate that day.

14 Q. No. Do you eat at home or did you eat outside on Monday  
15 evening?

16 A. No.

17 Q. You did not eat Monday evening?

18 A. Monday evening, no. I didn't eat.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, Darryle might not have, but are  
20 you asking about the children?

21 BY MR. CHHATRE:

22 Q. Yeah, children.

23 A. Oh, you're asking about the children?

24 Q. Children.

25 A. I don't know. I don't know what they ate.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Do you know where they ate?

3 MR. BROWN: Well, most time they eat in the kitchen or  
4 they go up to their room.

5 BY MR. CHHATRE:

6 Q. Okay. Did anybody cook food in the house that day on  
7 Monday?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Did anybody warm food on Monday evening?

10 A. Uh-uh.

11 Q. So kitchen was kind of closed on Monday evening, nobody  
12 used the kitchen?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MS. COCHRAN: What about the microwave?

16 MR. BROWN: The microwave? They use it every once in a  
17 while. They probably used it that day, probably, to my knowledge.

18 BY MR. CHHATRE:

19 Q. They did? Okay.

20 A. If they don't eat sandwiches or something. But ain't  
21 nobody -- yeah, that's it.

22 Q. Okay. Do not know if they used microwave?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. And what time the children went to bed if you  
25 know?

1           A.    I don't know what time they went to bed.  One of them  
2 was in the studio with me.

3           Q.    Okay.

4           A.    So I don't know what time the other kid went to bed.

5           Q.    Okay.  And what time did you go to bed?

6           A.    I went -- I went to sleep around about, I'd say,  
7 about --

8           Q.    What time?

9                   MR. MONEYHAM:  He's thinking.

10                  MR. CHHATRE:  Oh, okay.

11                  BY MR. CHHATRE:

12           Q.    Take your time.

13           A.    I think I went 11:30.

14           Q.    9:30?

15                   MR. MONEYHAM:  11.

16                   MS. COCHRAN:  11.

17                  BY MR. CHHATRE:

18           Q.    11:30.  Okay.  Did you smell any gas odor in the  
19 bathroom or bedroom or anywhere in the house at that time?

20           A.    No, sir.

21           Q.    And maybe tell -- tell me after you went to bed, what  
22 happened?  What happened and -- what happened -- when did you wake  
23 up or how did you wake up?  Let me put it this way.  How did you  
24 wake up on the night of the accident?  Do you recall?

25           A.    How did I wake up?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. I just heard a loud boom.

3 Q. Okay. And, you know, take your time. Maybe some of  
4 these are tough questions. But can you tell me, when you heard  
5 the boom, you woke up, what happened next? Do you recall?

6 A. I was struggling. I was struggling trying to move.

7 Q. Okay. You were trying to move?

8 A. I'm trying to move and I couldn't.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I felt trapped.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And I was screaming and calling her name

13 (indiscernible) --

14 Q. Okay. You were calling who?

15 A. -- the house, all the fire and stuff.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I couldn't move and I was screaming her name and I  
18 didn't get no response.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. It was so dark and I passed out. That's the only thing  
21 I remember.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Do we need to take a 5-minute break --

24 MR. CHHATRE: Five-minute break.

25 MR. NICHOLSON: -- maybe?

1 MR. CHHATRE: Let's go off the record.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Let's go off the record.

3 (Off the record.)

4 (On the record.)

5 MR. NICHOLSON: Back on the record with Darryle Brown.

6 Part 2. Ravi?

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. Darryle, just for clarification, I want to ask you some  
9 of the questions again. Were you working at the time of the  
10 accident?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. Okay. Were you working before the accident? When was  
13 the last time you were working?

14 A. I was working at Birmingham Recycling.

15 MR. MONEYHAM: When was the last time you were working  
16 before the accident?

17 MR. BROWN: I don't remember what date.

18 BY MR. CHHATRE:

19 Q. Okay. Thank you. On the day of the accident, which is  
20 Monday, did you go outside the home at all?

21 A. Once or twice probably.

22 Q. Twice?

23 MR. MONEYHAM: The day of the accident, did you go  
24 outside the house?

25 MR. BROWN: On the day of?

1           MR. MONEYHAM: The day before the accident. The  
2 accident was at night. The day before the accident did you go  
3 outside the house?

4           MR. BROWN: No.

5           BY MR. CHHATRE:

6           Q. No. Okay. Did you smell gas on Monday the day before?

7           A. What, in the house?

8           Q. In the house.

9           A. No, sir.

10          Q. Okay. Now, can you tell us, did you know what you  
11 should do if you were to smell the gas odor inside the house?

12          A. Uh-huh.

13          Q. Can you tell us what you're supposed to do?

14          A. Call someone. Call someone.

15          Q. Okay. And who that someone is?

16          A. I guess the house authority or the gas company.

17          Q. Okay. Did you smell gas inside the house anytime in the  
18 last 2 years when you are staying there?

19          A. No, sir.

20          Q. Did you smell gas outside your house in the last 2 years  
21 you have been staying in the house, in the unit?

22          A. Uh-uh.

23          MR. MONEYMAN: In the 2 years that you lived at Marks  
24 Village, did you ever smell gas outside the house?

25          MR. BROWN: Once or twice.



1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. Okay. Then what did you do when you smelled that gas?

3 A. I don't know, probably just -- I told my fiancée, but I  
4 don't know what she did about it.

5 Q. Okay. Did she say that she also smelled gas outside?

6 A. Not that I know of.

7 Q. Okay. What was the weather like on the day before the  
8 accident on Monday, at night?

9 A. What do you mean?

10 MR. MONEYHAM: The Monday night before -- the accident  
11 was Tuesday, early Tuesday morning, so late Monday night. That  
12 Monday, what was the weather like?

13 MS. COCHRAN: If you remember, Darryle.

14 MR. BROWN: I don't remember what the day was like.

15 BY MR. CHHATRE:

16 Q. Okay. Do you remember turning the heat on in the  
17 apartment, in the unit?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. And have you used the oven to heat the unit in  
20 the past?

21 A. No.

22 Q. No. Okay. Was there any repair work done either to the  
23 toilet or the water line in the past 2 years that you had been  
24 living in the unit?

25 MR. MONEYHAM: In the 2 years that you lived in this

1 apartment, did they ever have to come and fix the toilet?

2 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

3 BY MR. CHHATRE:

4 Q. Do you remember when?

5 A. No, I don't remember.

6 Q. Do you remember who came or --

7 A. No. I don't know who came. I don't remember who it  
8 was.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, were they with the Birmingham  
10 Housing Authority?

11 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. And do you know what work they  
13 were doing to fix the toilet?

14 MR. BROWN: Only thing I know, they doing something to  
15 the bathroom. I don't know the name.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: But, I mean, who called them to do that  
17 work?

18 MR. BROWN: She did.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

20 BY MR. CHHATRE:

21 Q. Okay. And was it a problem with the toilet flushing?  
22 Is that the reason she called?

23 A. Yes. It was stopped up.

24 Q. Oh, stopped up, okay. And after the repair people came,  
25 did the toilet work?

1           A.    Uh-huh.  It would work for a minute and then it'll stop,  
2  it'll stop right back up.

3           Q.    Can you repeat that, please?

4           A.    I said it'll work for a minute and stop back right up.

5           MR. CHHATRE:  Stopped --

6           MR. NICHOLSON:  It stopped right back up.

7           MR. CHHATRE:  Okay.

8           MS. COCHRAN:  It worked for a minute and then --

9           MR. CHHATRE:  Stopped back up, okay.

10          MS. COCHRAN:  It's just an expression.

11          MR. NICHOLSON:  Right.  No, I understand.

12          BY MR. CHHATRE:

13          Q.    And then what happened?

14          A.    Call them again.

15          Q.    Okay.

16          MR. NICHOLSON:  Did we -- I didn't hear.  When about was  
17  this work done?

18          MR. BROWN:  I don't remember.

19          MS. COCHRAN:  I think he answered he didn't remember.

20          MR. NICHOLSON:  Can you put it in -- the same year as  
21  the accident, year before?  Kind of --

22          MR. BROWN:  I can't remember.

23          MR. NICHOLSON:  Don't know.  That's fine.

24          MR. CHHATRE:  That is fine.  That is fine.

25          BY MR. CHHATRE:

1 Q. So on the -- on Monday, the day before the accident, did  
2 the toilet work?

3 A. Not that I know of, because I was upstairs.

4 Q. Okay. Was there any water line work done on the unit  
5 for the 2 years you had been staying there? Was there any work  
6 done on the water line?

7 MR. MONEYHAM: In the 2 years that you lived at this  
8 apartment did they ever come in to work on the water lines?

9 MR. BROWN: The only thing I remember was a guy there  
10 with a water tank. That's the only thing I remember.

11 MR. MONEYHAM: Are you talking about inside the  
12 apartment?

13 MR. BROWN: Uh-uh. Outside.

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. On the outside. Okay. And when was that? You said a  
16 long time ago?

17 A. I don't actually remember what day it was -- how long it  
18 been.

19 Q. Okay. But was like a year before, 2 years before the  
20 day of the explosion?

21 A. Not that I remember.

22 Q. Okay. But there was some work done?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, I wasn't clear on that. Was there  
25 work done on the water line? I thought I heard there was someone

1 with a water tank, but --

2 MR. MONEYHAM: That was outside the apartment, correct?

3 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

4 MR. MONEYHAM: Tell them what you saw when you saw the  
5 water tank outside.

6 MR. BROWN: They were putting something down in a hole  
7 and I guess the water would come out and ended up pushing  
8 something, I guess.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Did you get that?

10 MR. NICHOLSON: I got what he said. Yes.

11 MR. CHHATRE: And that's all I have for you. Thank you.  
12 I appreciate your time.

13 MR. BROWN: You're welcome.

14 MR. NICHOLSON: Bob?

15 BY MR. GARDNER:

16 Q. First of all, thank you, Mr. Brown, for your time today.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Do you recall ever being instructed by the homeowner's  
19 association or the housing authority to -- or were you given any  
20 information about what to do if you smelled a gas leak inside or  
21 outside your property?

22 A. What you mean?

23 Q. I'm sorry. Let me rephrase that. I apologize.

24 Did the housing authority ever give you information, to  
25 your knowledge, about what to do if you smelled natural gas?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. And so you indicated that you guys, I think, had  
3 smelled gas a couple of times over time. Do you know if that was  
4 reported to the housing authority and Alagasco or --

5 A. Not that, not that I know of.

6 Q. Okay.

7 MR. GARDNER: That's all I have.

8 MS. McATEE: I just have one question.

9 MR. BROWN: Um-hum.

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Nancy, can you just --

11 BY MS. McATEE:

12 Q. This is Nancy McAtee, NTSB. In the bathroom downstairs,  
13 do you recall if there were any holes in the wall, particularly  
14 underneath the sink?

15 A. No, not that I know of.

16 Q. It was all solid, the solid --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- wall? Thank you.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 BY MR. BLACKWOOD:

21 Q. This is Keith Blackwood. Did the housing authority give  
22 you any instruction on how to use appliances properly, whether it  
23 be an oven or a hot water heater, and what to do if they were  
24 damaged or broken, who to call?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. Thank you.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

4 Q. Oh, it's my turn. Matt Nicholson, NTSB.

5 Darryle, on a similar note, did you ever receive  
6 information, or do you remember receiving information, from  
7 Alagasco about what to do if you smelled natural gas?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. Now, Darryle, in the time you were at the  
10 apartment, were all the appliances working?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. They were. Okay. And if, for instance, a pilot light  
13 went out on the oven, who would you call in that case?

14 A. If?

15 Q. If, if a pilot light ever went out on your oven?

16 A. Yeah, I can get her -- I get my fiancée to call the  
17 housing authority.

18 Q. The housing authority. Okay. Do you remember if the  
19 heater was turned on or off at the apartment?

20 A. It was off.

21 Q. It was off. Okay. And why was the heater off?

22 A. Because it was no sense in using it.

23 Q. No sense using it.

24 A. It wasn't cold.

25 Q. Oh, it wasn't cold?

1 A. Uh-uh.

2 Q. Okay.

3 MR. MONEYHAM: Are you talking about that day?

4 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

5 Q. I am actually talking about the day before, the morning  
6 of the accident. It was off?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Okay. And that's because you're saying the apartment  
9 stayed warm enough?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay. Darryle, you said earlier, when you were asked  
12 about when people in the apartment went to bed, you didn't know  
13 when the other people went to bed because you were in the studio  
14 with one of the other children?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Could you tell me, which child were you in the studio  
17 with?

18 A. Antuan.

19 Q. Antuan. Okay. And was anyone living in this apartment,  
20 to the best of your knowledge, a smoker?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. They were? Who would have been a smoker.

23 A. My fiancée, Tyrennis.

24 Q. Okay. Okay, you mentioned that you went to bed around  
25 11:30 to the best of your recollection.



1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Was your fiancée also in bed at the time?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Okay. She had gone prior to you to bed?

5 A. She was already in the bed.

6 Q. Yeah. Okay. And at no time during the early morning  
7 hours or evening after you went to bed, did you get up? Is that  
8 true?

9 A. What are you talking about?

10 Q. I should -- that was --

11 MR. MONEYHAM: After you went to bed, did you get up out  
12 of bed?

13 MR. BROWN: Uh-uh.

14 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

15 Q. Okay. So the next time you awoke was when you heard the  
16 explosion. Okay.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Do you know if anyone else was up during the night?

19 A. Not to my knowledge.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, Ravi, got any follow-ups?

22 MR. CHHATRE: Yes.

23 BY MR. CHHATRE:

24 Q. A couple of questions. The people living in the unit  
25 back to you, did you guys ever talk to them about gas odor?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Did anybody in the neighborhood complain to you that  
3 they smelled gas?

4 A. Not that I know of.

5 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you so much for your time. I  
6 understand it's very difficult and we appreciate you helping us.

7 MS. COCHRAN: Okay.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Anybody else? Bob, anything else?

9 MR. GARDNER: No, sir.

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Nancy?

11 MS. McATEE: No.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Keith?

13 MR. BLACKWOOD: I do have one question on the oven.

14 BY MR. BLACKWOOD:

15 Q. How often did you all cook meals in the house, whether  
16 it would be with the oven or microwave or some type of heating  
17 appliance like that? Would you say once a week, twice a week or?

18 A. I'd say like twice, twice a week.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. NICHOLSON:

21 Q. Okay. Darryle, I do have one follow-up. You said that,  
22 well, you weren't using the heater for heat. Was the oven being  
23 used as a heating element?

24 A. (No audible response.)

25 Q. Okay. Was the oven door closed, to the best of your

1 recollection, the night you went to bed?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I don't have anything else.

5 Ravi?

6 MR. CHHATRE: No.

7 MR. NICHOLSON: I think we're good.

8 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you so much.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Thanks so much, Darryle. I really  
10 appreciate it. I understand that it's difficult --

11 Okay, at this time we'll go off the record and close the  
12 interview.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO)  
                                  NATURAL GAS RELEASE WITH IGNITION  
                                  BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA  
                                  DECEMBER 17, 2013  
                                  Interview of Darryle Brown

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-14-MP-001

PLACE:                    Birmingham, Alabama

DATE:                     July 17, 2014

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

---

Vanita Tildon  
Transcriber



