

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO) \*

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

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA \*

DECEMBER 17, 2013 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: QUINTON BROWN

Rental Office  
 Charles P. Marks Village  
 Birmingham, Alabama

Friday,  
 December 20, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON  
 Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Accident Investigator  
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous  
Materials Investigations  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20594  

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RAVI CHHATRE, Accident Investigator  
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous  
Material Investigations  
National Transportation Safety Board

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

WILLIE WILLIAMS, Investigator  
Fire Investigations Bureau  
City of Birmingham, Alabama

WALLACE JONES, Gas Pipeline Safety Administrator  
Alabama Public Service Commission

DON LUPO, Director  
Mayor's Office of Citizens Assistance  
Birmingham, Alabama

TALANA BROWN, Detective  
Homicide  
Birmingham Police Department

LaKENYA BEND, Director of Modernization and Development  
Housing Authority of the Birmingham District  
Birmingham, Alabama

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Quinton Brown:		
By Mr. Chhatre		6
By Mr. Nicholson		16
By Mr. Jones		24
By Mr. Nicholson		24
By Mr. Chhatre		30
By Mr. Nicholson		33
By Mr. Chhatre		36

## I N T E R V I E W

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Good afternoon. Today is Friday,  
3 December 20th, 2013. My name is Matthew Nicholson, and I am an  
4 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board in  
5 Washington, D.C. We are currently in Birmingham, Alabama at the  
6 Charles P. Marks Village housing community rental office,  
7 investigating the Birmingham, Alabama natural gas leak with  
8 ignition, which occurred on December 17th, 2013. This is Case  
9 Number DCA-14-MP-001. We are here today to interview Quinton  
10 Brown.

11           For the record, Quinton, please state your first and  
12   last name with spelling.

13 MR. BROWN: Quinton Brown; Q-u-i-n-t-o-n; Brown, B-r-o-  
14 w-n.

15 MR. NICHOLSON: Thanks, Quinton. And if you would,  
16 please state for the record your title, current employer, and a  
17 business e-mail and phone, if you have one.

18 MR. BROWN: Maintenance technician.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: For?

20 MR. BROWN: Birmingham Housing Authority.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Thanks. And do you have a business  
22 e-mail or phone?

23 MR. BROWN: No.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Okay, thanks. At this time what  
25 I'd like to do is for each person in the room to state your name,

1 with spelling, the agency you represent, and a business phone and  
2 e-mail address, please. I will begin.

3 Matthew Nicholson. That's N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n.

4 [REDACTED].

5 MS. BROWN: Talana Brown; T-a-l-a-n-a, B-r-o-w-n. I'm a  
6 police officer with the Birmingham Police Department. E-mail is  
7 going to be [REDACTED]. Phone number, area  
8 code 2 [REDACTED].

9 MR. LUPPO: I'm Don Lupo. It's D-o-n, L-u-p-o. I'm the  
10 director of the Mayor's Office of Citizen Assistance for the City  
11 of Birmingham. My office number is [REDACTED]. My e-mail is  
12 don.lupo -- l-u-p-o -- [REDACTED].

13 MR. GARDNER: I'm Bob Gardner, Director of Quality  
14 Assurance and Compliance for the Alabama Gas Corporation. My work  
15 number is 2 [REDACTED]. My e-mail is [REDACTED] -- e-n-e-  
16 r-g-e-n -- .com.

17 MS. BEND: My name is LaKenya Bend; L-a, capital K, e-n-  
18 y-a, B-e-n-d. I am the Director of Modernization and Development  
19 with the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District. My office  
20 number: [REDACTED], and my e-mail address is [REDACTED].

21 MR. JONES: Wallace Jones; W-a-l-l-a-c-e, J-o-n-e-s.  
22 I'm Administrator for Gas Pipeline Safety for the Alabama Public  
23 Service Commission. My business phone is area code 9 [REDACTED].  
24 My business e-mail is wallace.[REDACTED].

25 MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre. That's R-a-v-i; last name

1 Chhatre, C-h-h-a-t-r-e. I am with National Transportation Safety  
2 Board. My business phone is [REDACTED]. My e-mail is  
3 [REDACTED] -- that's r-a-v-i-n-d-r-a, dot, c-h-h-a-t-r-e --  
4 [REDACTED].

5 MR. NICHOLSON: Why don't you go ahead and start, Ravi?

6 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

7 INTERVIEW OF QUINTON BROWN

8 BY MR. CHHATRE:

9 Q. Quinton, can you please tell us your background  
10 information, how long you have been with the Housing Authority,  
11 what -- if you have any formal/informal training, and what you do?  
12 And your routine --

13 A. Okay, I've been with the Housing Authority right at 7  
14 years. I've worked out here in Marks Village for over 4 years.  
15 And then I went to Kimbrell Homes (ph.), to the other property,  
16 and worked over 2 years. And I've been back here late August, and  
17 I've been working here ever since. And I just -- the site was,  
18 had 155 units going while I worked here, and we went to 497, like  
19 98% or something like that.

20 And myself and the temp worker, maintenance techs, we  
21 filled the place up. And at first that had contracts, but we did  
22 300 units and then we left. But it's been good. I practically  
23 knew everything out here.

24 Q. Okay.

25 MS. BEND: When he mentioned the 155 to 497, he's

1 talking about occupancy.

2 MR. BROWN: Um-hmm.

3 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay.

4 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

5 MS. BEND: At one point we were not as occupied, but --

6 MR. BROWN: Yeah.

7 MS. BEND: -- the occupancy has been up.

8 MR. BROWN: That's right.

9 BY MR. CHHATRE:

10 Q. So in your everyday work, what do you do?

11 A. My everyday work I do vacancy and prep, and that is  
12 turning the unit when somebody move out, whatever needs to be  
13 done, and I go in and do it. I do all work orders. Anything  
14 wrong, I do the work orders. Do anything on the site. And that's  
15 what the maintenance tech do.

16 Q. So whatever repairs, maintenance activity you do has to  
17 have work order and work --

18 A. Have?

19 Q. Have to have work order for it?

20 A. To do work orders? Yes.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, to do work, period, you have to  
23 have a work order?

24 MR. BROWN: Well, unless, unless an emergency or  
25 something.

1 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

2 MR. BROWN: That you can't get to it, then we'll put it  
3 on soft copy.

4 BY MR. CHHATRE:

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. And you have to show proof that you've done.

7 Q. Okay. So how many years you are working with the -- in  
8 this particular area?

9 A. I'd say over 4½ years.

10 Q. Okay. And in those 4 years here, or 4-plus years, how  
11 many times you have to go into a unit to address the gas odor  
12 smell?

13 A. In 4½ years, I mean, you can't really count the times  
14 you go in and do a gas smell.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. A lot of times, I mean, it could just be a pilot on the  
17 stove. You know how a pilot can blow out?

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. You really can't count. I can't answer that one.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It's multiple times.

22 Q. Multiple times.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. Is it common, like once a week or once a month  
25 typically on the 4 years or is it more frequent than that?



1           A.    Yeah, I would say once or twice a month.

2           Q.    Oh.

3           A.    And this is a big site.  You know we have --

4           Q.    Sure.

5           A.    -- almost 500 units.

6           Q.    Right.  Okay.  And when you go to address the gas odor  
7 problem, what do you do?

8           A.    Well, I light the pilot light, and I have checked for  
9 gas leaks and spray it with my water bottle or whatever it takes.  
10 Or the little tester we got.  And just make sure I don't smell  
11 gas, and look at the meter outside and see if the meter going the  
12 right way.  And that's it.

13          Q.    Okay.  Now, in this particular case we're interested in  
14 unit 79 and 80, the one that blew up.  Do you recall going to that  
15 particular unit ever in these 5 years for the gas odor?

16          A.    You know, like I don't really remember.  I'm thinking  
17 maybe I went there 2½, 3 months ago.  Maybe 79 or 80.

18          Q.    Okay.

19          A.    And see when it got cold, we did light a lot of heaters  
20 and -- but I'm not sure which one I went to.

21          Q.    Like --

22          A.    Because it's just two units (indiscernible).

23          Q.    Um-hum.

24          A.    But whichever one I went to, I mean, I checked -- I  
25 always check for gas leaks.  And I didn't smell any gas and we

1 always spray it.

2 Q. Right. And so you didn't see any, any leak?

3 A. No. If I went to that unit.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I'm not sure.

6 Q. Right. Okay.

7 A. Because this --

8 Q. That's fine.

9 A. -- is when I first came back here. I haven't been out  
10 here but like since late August.

11 Q. Okay. Okay. Now have you smelled gas while you are  
12 walking around, I mean going to/from your office to some building  
13 or the street? Have you smelled gas outside anybody's apartment?

14 A. Well, I have in them over 4 years, and every time we'll  
15 address it and we call Alagasco. And when we got gas outside and  
16 they come dig it up.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Every time we smell it. I mean, that's a dangerous  
19 situation.

20 Q. Okay. And who makes that call?

21 A. The office make the call. We call the office --

22 Q. And then --

23 A. -- and have them to call Alagasco.

24 Q. So do you know what they did when you made the phone  
25 call -- I mean, when the gas company comes in, do you know what

1     happened? Did they -- would you know if they did anything?

2           A.     Well, sometimes when I seen them come. They just digs  
3     it up and fix the gas leak.

4           Q.     Okay.

5           A.     I'm not saying that unit 80 or 79, when they're saying  
6     over the whole site (indiscernible) --

7           Q.     Yes, and that's what we are saying. We aren't --

8           A.     Okay.

9           Q.     -- saying 79 or 80; we are saying in general. Okay.

10          A.     They stop the smell, I mean, when I used to be out here.

11          Q.     Okay. And when you go inside the house for gas odor  
12     have you ever seen the gas line that's coming in the house from  
13     the meter?

14          A.     Yes.

15          Q.     And in your experience have you ever seen that line  
16     leaking the gas?

17          A.     Yeah, I have.

18          Q.     In what way?

19          A.     Pipe come up not tight, not all the way tight, or  
20     something like that.

21          Q.     Which -- what is not tight?

22          A.     The line coming in behind the heater.

23          Q.     Behind the heater?

24          A.     Behind the heater. Sometimes, you know, you just make  
25     sure you tighten it. You spray it, check it with your meter; you

1    spray it and check it.

2           Q.    Okay.  So you're talking about heater?

3           A.    Yeah, you said the line coming in from the outside,

4    right?

5           Q.    Outside, yes.

6           A.    Yeah.

7           Q.    And so that is --

8           A.    Oh, I don't -- oh, you're talking about the main line

9    from the meter?

10          Q.    Correct.

11          A.    Oh, I don't --

12          Q.    Main line coming in from the meter.

13          A.    I don't even know where that's at.

14          Q.    Okay.  So okay, that helps.

15          A.    Um-hum.  I never had to work on that line.

16          Q.    On that line, okay.

17          A.    Now it might have been time in this bedroom we found a

18    rusted, a corroded pipe, and it was leaking.

19          Q.    Okay.

20          A.    And the plumber come cut it out and replaced it.

21          Q.    And where was it?

22          A.    This one time.

23          Q.    Sure.  And where was it?

24          A.    It's been a long time.  It might have been 4 years.

25          Q.    No, but where was the leak?

1           A.   Where was it?  It was at 300-and-something.  300 -- I  
2   can't say exactly which unit, but maybe it's been about like 308,  
3   309.

4           MS. BEND:  Unit 308, a line?

5           MR. BROWN:  That's what it was?

6           MS. BEND:  I'm asking you (indiscernible) --

7           MR. BROWN:  Yeah, somewhere down in there.

8           BY MR. CHHATRE:

9           Q.   No, not the unit.  I said location in the house.  Where  
10   do you see the -- where did you see the rusted pipe?

11          A.   It was coming in --

12          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:  Sorry, Don, can I see you real  
13   quick?  I'm sorry.

14          MR. BROWN:  It was coming in behind, up under -- coming  
15   in by the sink but up under the sink, because we had to take the  
16   sink out to get to it.

17          BY MR. CHHATRE:

18          Q.   Okay.  So the gas line?

19          A.   Yeah.

20          Q.   Underneath the sink?

21          A.   Underneath the sink.

22          Q.   Okay.

23          A.   See it's a one-bedroom unit and then this goes on the  
24   wall behind it up under the sink.

25          Q.   Okay.  Now in your recollection in 4, 5 years, have you

1 ever gone to a residence when they complain the gas odor but you  
2 couldn't find any gas leak?

3 A. Yes, I have. And I wouldn't have never left if I had  
4 smelled gas anywhere I went like that. I wouldn't have left. So  
5 I go checks it out every time, and if I couldn't find it, we have  
6 them to call Alagasco.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But not too many times that I couldn't find it.

9 Q. Okay. Now have you ever been to a residence with a gas  
10 odor and you walk in and is the odor overpowering to you? I mean,  
11 do you say, "oh, my god, it's too much gas; I can't breathe" or  
12 something?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Has it ever happened -- okay.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And do you recall when? How frequently?

17 A. Well, like I said, it'll be stove pilots, stove pilot  
18 lights.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. See, you don't go there every day, that pilot can go a  
21 long time and you'll never know it, unless you go there to do  
22 another work order, you walk in, you smell gas.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So now that's when I do go ahead and light it because  
25 that's an emergency situation.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I air it out and then light it.

3 Q. Um-hmm. And that has happened?

4 A. Yeah, that's happened before.

5 Q. But the odor is so strong that you can immediately smell  
6 it?

7 A. Well, I could smell it.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Because I think of children at these units when I go to  
10 them. Sometimes the tenants don't, you know, they don't smell it  
11 like a maintenance tech would because they really just don't know  
12 what it's supposed to be, I guess. But I know what to look for  
13 because I don't want nothing to happen on our site.

14 Q. Right. Okay.

15 MR. CHHATRE: I think that's all I have.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Wallace?

17 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you.

18 MR. JONES: Okay. No, I don't have any questions. Not  
19 at this time.

20 MR. NICHOLSON: Bob, I guess we go to you. Do you have  
21 any?

22 MR. GARDNER: I have no questions.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Talana?

24 MS. BROWN: No questions.

25 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Yeah, I'll just --

1 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

2 Q. You said when winter comes around you do a lot of  
3 furnace lights. Would -- so the pilot light's not lit all year  
4 around on those furnace units?

5 A. Well, most of the time they turns them off or have us  
6 come turn it off.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. See, you've got a lot of elderly people. They're afraid  
9 to turn it off, so they'll call it in for us to come turn it off.

10 Q. And when --

11 A. We turn the valve off.

12 Q. Yeah, you turn that gas valve off?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. So, and if I call you out to do that, you're going to  
15 issue -- there's going to be a work order?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Even for something as small as that?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. Do you remember recently when you were being  
20 called out to do these furnace turn-ons, was unit 79 one that  
21 needed their --

22 A. No, I don't.

23 Q. Okay. You don't know or --

24 A. I don't recall.

25 Q. You don't recall.



1           A.    But like I say, I went to 80 or 79 when I first got back  
2 over here to light the heater, I think.

3           Q.    Oh, okay.

4           A.    And because me and one of the other maintenance techs  
5 was together, and that's all we did, but that's been a long time.

6           Q.    You said that was August; is that what you said?

7           A.    I came back late August.

8           Q.    Okay.

9           A.    Something like that.

10          Q.    Okay.

11          A.    But I came -- it had to have been like maybe September  
12 or something like that when I was over there.

13          Q.    Okay.

14          A.    Well, see, you go around the whole site.  See, I do the  
15 work orders, and I might touch everything, every unit.

16          Q.    Yeah.  So we had heard previously that each technician  
17 had 100 units.  Is that --

18          A.    Yes.

19          Q.    So you have 100 units?

20          A.    Yes.

21          Q.    Okay.

22          A.    It started -- when you got all your maintenance techs  
23 here, you got 60, 64 units.  So you got, what, six maintenance  
24 techs.  But we very seldom had everybody here, so we had to raise  
25 it to 125, something like that.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So I've been on 125 lately. That's why I'm not sure  
3 about that 80 and 79, because my units went to 64. But all the  
4 time we got guys off sick, so you have to step in and take their  
5 place.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. On the -- you said you've been -- one time you were  
9 overwhelmed by gas odors and you said that was from the pilot  
10 lights being out on the stove?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. Is there a pilot light for the oven as well?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It be out too sometimes.

16 Q. If one's out, if the top's out, the bottom's out, right?

17 A. No.

18 Q. No? All right.

19 A. They don't be out at the same time.

20 Q. Okay. And in that situation you said -- were people in  
21 this -- this was a vacated apartment or were there tenants in that  
22 apartment?

23 A. It be tenants in it, you know.

24 Q. Okay.

25 (Phone ringing.)

1 MR. NICHOLSON: Can you silence that?

2 MR. BROWN: Yes.

3 I'm in a meeting right now.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: We'll be off the record here.

5 (Off the record.)

6 (On the record.)

7 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Back on the record.

8 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

9 Q. So I just wanted to go back to the time that you said  
10 you went in and pilots were out but you smelled a strong gas odor.  
11 I wasn't clear that there were people living in that unit that you  
12 visited?

13 A. Yes. I mean --

14 Q. Okay. But they didn't recognize the smell; is that what  
15 you were --

16 A. Sometimes, sometimes they'll call us.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And call it in and we do a work order. You go there and  
19 the pilot light might be out.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. The oven or the top. You know, most of the time it  
22 don't be both on there at one time.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And the gas company is not going to turn the gas on from  
25 the meter if the stove gas line's on.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. Then because the meter just be jumping, you know. So  
3 they don't even turn it on.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. So it don't just be on by itself. And we go right there  
6 and light it. It don't be the kind of gas that will cause a  
7 explosion on that.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I mean, I'm not a expert, but I wouldn't think so, one  
10 pilot.

11 Q. But do they call you out there because the stove or the  
12 oven's not working or do they call you out there because they  
13 smelled gas?

14 A. Well, they have called sometimes because the stove not  
15 working.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And that's it end up being.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And they might hit the stove and it won't come on.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So a lot of people don't know about pilots so you go  
22 light it and explain what it's all about.

23 Q. Okay. You mentioned you go out and if you're called out  
24 for a gas leak you do a bubble test and you also -- did you say  
25 you were using an instrumentation like a gas sniffer or something?

1           A.    Yes.

2           Q.    Okay.  What -- can you explain what that is?  You said  
3 you watch the needle or what are you watching for on the needle?

4           A.    Well, it's got the little lights.  I mean, it's the same  
5 thing the gas company use.

6           Q.    Okay.

7           A.    With the little antenna on it.

8           Q.    Okay.

9           A.    And you start it outside, and it's beep -- it goes beep,  
10 beep, beep, beep, beep.  You wait until it settle down.  Like I  
11 said, I'm not a expert on that.

12          Q.    Sure.

13          A.    But then when it settle down, just beep, beep, beep,  
14 then you go in and test.

15          Q.    Okay.

16          A.    And it's a good tool we use.  And water always, water  
17 and soap is good too.  But I can smell that gas.

18          Q.    Yeah.

19          A.    I've been doing it too long.  I know gas.

20          Q.    Right.  So the meter you're using, is that a new thing  
21 or have you had it a while?

22          A.    Well, we used to have one a long time ago.

23          Q.    Okay.

24          A.    And I don't know what happened to them then or nothing.

25          Q.    Okay.

1           A.    But --

2           Q.    How are you trained to use -- who trained you to use the  
3 handheld instrument?

4           A.    Well, we just trained ourself, you know, the senior  
5 maintenance tech.

6           Q.    Oh, okay.

7           A.    And --

8           Q.    He showed you?

9           A.    He showed us and then Alagasco has showed us before too.

10          Q.    So the idea of starting outside is to kind of clear it,  
11 make sure it's --

12          A.    Yes. To set --

13          Q.    -- pulling in clean air?

14          A.    That's what sets it. Yeah.

15          Q.    Okay.

16          A.    Um-hum.

17          Q.    And then you can take it inside.

18                I want to be sure I understood too. We talked about a  
19 time you said you found a rusted, corroded pipe behind a sink?

20          A.    Yes.

21          Q.    That was a gas pipe?

22          A.    That was a gas pipe.

23          Q.    Because I thought I had seen the gas line come in these  
24 apartments and up into the ceiling and run in, maybe in the  
25 concrete?

1           A.    It --

2           Q.    Does it come back under the sink?

3           A.    Well, see, this is a one-bedroom.

4           Q.    Um-hum.

5           A.    On the end.

6           Q.    Okay.

7           A.    And I think it did come in up and then come back down,

8 then go behind the sink.

9           Q.    Oh, okay.

10          A.    Across the wall, um-hum.

11          Q.    Before it goes to the oven?

12          A.    Yeah.

13          Q.    Okay.

14          A.    That's right.

15          Q.    So it had corroded because, what, the sink was leaking?

16          A.    I think it was just -- I can't say what happened to it.

17          Q.    Okay.

18          A.    But I knew -- they've been here ever since '53, I guess,

19 or whatever.

20          Q.    Sure. And that -- the fix for that, you call a plumber

21 out to --

22          A.    Yeah.

23          Q.    -- fix that? Okay.

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

25 think. Ravi?

1 MR. CHHATRE: No, I haven't any, no follow-up questions.

2 MR. JONES: This is Wallace. I do have something I just  
3 thought about.

4 BY MR. JONES:

5 Q. Quinton, have you ever gone in an apartment and found  
6 them using the stove for heat instead of the heater?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Is that very common or just occasionally or --

9 A. I mean we tell them not to because that's carbon  
10 monoxide, for one thing.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. But you know we're not there all the time with them.  
13 And we tell them not to do that. And -- but they just insist on  
14 doing it. And I see that a lot, you know.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MR. JONES: That's all I have.

17 MR. NICHOLSON: Bob, do you want --

18 MR. GARDNER: I have no questions. Nothing.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I've got -- I'm going to follow-  
20 up on that.

21 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

22 Q. You have seen the oven open and I think we've heard that  
23 from other people. If we're talking about unit 79, would that  
24 have been something you ever saw in unit 79 or knew about?

25 A. No, because if I went to 79, I might have went there one



1 time, if I went since I've been back.

2 Q. Oh, okay.

3 A. But it's been a long time since I worked out here, so  
4 there's a lot of people done --

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. -- work this site since I've been here.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And I'm just coming back. But I know the site because  
9 this is where I started at and I just know it.

10 Q. So these are new tenants in 79 since you --

11 A. Well, I didn't know them. So they came since I left.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Okay. And it's not -- it doesn't sound like unit 79 is  
15 a unit that's calling you out a lot and you're not --

16 A. I just don't even think I've been to 79 since I've been  
17 here.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But I went to 79 when we had a water leak. And it might  
20 have been that day or the day before --

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I'm sorry we're -- yeah, we  
22 actually were talking about 80.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Is that where --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 80 is where we --

1 MR. CHHATRE: Yes.

2 MR. BROWN: Well, they're right together, you know.

3 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. Um-hum. And wasn't nobody home, so I said, well, I got  
6 a lot of emergency stuff to do so I'll come back later. And I was  
7 stunned that that happened. All I did was knock on the door, and  
8 "It's maintenance, Housing Authority," you know. There wasn't  
9 nobody home, so I just begged off on that work order and left.  
10 And, no, I didn't never go in. I'm glad I didn't go in.

11 Q. Into 80?

12 A. In 79.

13 Q. 79, okay.

14 A. Had a water leak.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. It had been raining a lot. So I said it wasn't raining  
17 and they wasn't there to tell me where it's at, so I just begged  
18 off of that one.

19 Q. Right. So if you have a work order and no one's home,  
20 you just -- you don't complete it?

21 A. No, we go in, but see --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- we had a lot of work orders.

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. These heaters and stuff to be lit. And I knew it wasn't

1 raining. It take a lot of rain for it to be leaking in the  
2 ceiling.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So since they wasn't there, I just begged off on that  
5 one. I was intending on going back when they get home so they can  
6 tell me where it's leaking at.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So --

9 Q. So I've asked about 79 --

10 A. And the work order that I got for 79, I closed it out  
11 after that had happened because I didn't even really know how to  
12 fill this one out.

13 Q. After the accident?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Yeah, okay. Yeah, the roof didn't matter much, I guess.

16 So if we go to unit 80, which is the one I believe that  
17 actually did explode, then you don't have any specific memories  
18 about them using the oven --

19 A. No.

20 Q. -- to heat the place?

21 A. Un-uh.

22 Q. Okay. That unit doesn't stick out as being problematic  
23 or a lot of calls?

24 A. No, not since I've been back. I mean --

25 Q. Okay. Okay, and --

1           A.    -- because if they call us with a gas leak or light or  
2 stove or heater or something, we go do it. We have to do that.

3           Q.    Right.

4           A.    And we don't get the work order, we wouldn't know about  
5 it.

6           Q.    Are the work orders -- do you get a priority on these  
7 work orders? Is one the same as the other? Is a gas leak a  
8 higher priority; you've got to get that done today, Quinton,  
9 and --

10          A.    Yes.

11          Q.    Okay.

12          A.    That's --

13          Q.    And a plugged drain, that's a lower priority or --

14          A.    Yes, a gas leak is more priority.

15          Q.    Okay.

16          A.    I mean, a drain, that ain't going to hurt you on that.  
17 I mean, you don't have to rush to that.

18          Q.    But that priority is on your work order?

19          A.    The gas?

20          Q.    Well, whatever the work is on the work order --

21          A.    Yes.

22          Q.    -- it has a priority assigned to it?

23          A.    Yes.

24          Q.    Okay. Okay. So you know which has to be done first?

25          A.    Yeah. And a lot of the time on the gas leak, the office

1 will call us and send -- head us on around to the gas leak.  
2 Sometimes we might fill the work order out when we get through  
3 with the problem. But see, if you got a gas leak you've go and  
4 address it.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And sometimes it's too late if we just come here first  
7 to get the work order. So they call us from the office and send  
8 us to the problem.

9 MS. BEND: You're talking about the soft work orders,  
10 right? The --

11 MR. BROWN: The soft copy?

12 MS. BEND: Um-hum.

13 MR. BROWN: Yeah, soft copies. See, if it was a gas  
14 leak they call us on our radio. We got to move on it. We don't  
15 have time to come here. That's when we do a soft copy.

16 MS. BEND: Um-hum.

17 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

18 Q. Can you explain -- soft copy is what? You just write it  
19 down and fill it in later?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Is that it?

22 A. No, we write it down. After we do the work order, we go  
23 ahead and fill a soft copy out. The hard copy's what they print  
24 out here in the office. We have soft copies with us in the truck.  
25 And it's just showing our credit too for what we did.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Oh, I see. You bring that in to match up with the  
4 ticket they produce --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- in the office?

7 MR. GARDNER: May I ask a question?

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Sure. Bob Gardner.

9 MR. GARDNER: If --

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Bob Gardner.

11 MR. GARDNER: So if someone wants someone, one of your  
12 -- one of the technicians to come to their location, they call the  
13 office. The office would typically generate a work order that  
14 would be given to a technician, and if it's an emergency they go  
15 ahead and go and fill out the paperwork later. Is that accurate?

16 MS. BEND: If someone calls in, they fill it out.

17 MR. GARDNER: Okay.

18 MS. BEND: The soft copy comes with the resident on  
19 site.

20 MR. GARDNER: I've got you. Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. BEND: That's correct?

22 MR. BROWN: Yes. I mean, you don't to be messing around  
23 when you've got a gas leak. You have to go on because we suffer  
24 risking ourself too.

25 BY MR. CHHATRE:

1           Q.    Have you -- and this is Ravi -- have you seen Alabama  
2   Gas doing any repair work on the streets while you are working  
3   here?  It doesn't matter who called, but have you seen them  
4   digging up and doing some repair on the pipe?

5           A.    Well, I can't recall.  Like, I know they come when we  
6   call them.

7           Q.    Okay.

8           A.    But like I said, I've been gone for over 2 years.

9           Q.    Right.

10          A.    And I just came back, so --

11          Q.    Okay.

12          A.    That's a question you're going to have ask somebody  
13   that's stayed over here.

14          Q.    And do you recall any paper or any advertisement that  
15   Alabama Gas gave you here in the office that says call 911 or call  
16   them if you smell the gas?

17          A.    Can you ask that question --

18          Q.    Sure.

19          A.    -- again?

20          Q.    Has Alabama Gas told you or somebody here told you that  
21   if you smell gas to call 911 or call them?

22          A.    Told the tenant to call them?

23          Q.    Yeah.

24          A.    No, I don't know nothing about that.

25          Q.    Okay.

1           A.    Because we tell everybody to call the office. I mean,  
2   you can call either one of them. You've got a gas leak, I would  
3   call everybody, the gas company and the office, you know. You  
4   know we're going to take care of it when you call, but Alagasco  
5   need to get here. I would call them first, I mean, and then call  
6   the office. That's what I would do.

7           Q.    Them meaning Alabama Gas? Call them, them meaning the  
8   gas company or them meaning who?

9           A.    I mean, the tenant should call the gas -- Alagasco  
10   first.

11          Q.    Gas company, okay.

12          A.    And then call us. But we still probably beat them  
13   there.

14          Q.    Right.

15          A.    But that's what I would do.

16          Q.    Okay.

17          A.    Just get them on the way.

18          Q.    Okay.

19          A.    Especially if you're smelling it outside like that.

20          Q.    Has the gas company ever come here in the Housing  
21   Authority to meet all your technicians and told them that either  
22   you should call them, 911, or you should tell tenants? I mean,  
23   has there been any communication by meeting, by fliers with you?  
24   And when I say you, I am talking about all the technicians here  
25   and the gas company.



1           A.   Well, I never remember having a meeting with the gas  
2 company.

3           Q.   Don't?

4           A.   Since I've been here.

5           Q.   Do or don't?

6           A.   I haven't.

7           Q.   Okay.

8           A.   I mean, it might have happened before I got here.

9           Q.   Okay.  What about when you were here 4 years ago?

10          A.   I never met with the gas company.

11          Q.   Okay.

12          A.   We never had a major problem like that.  I mean, we've  
13 fixed everything.

14          Q.   Yeah.  Okay.

15                BY MR. NICHOLSON:

16          Q.   Now I'm going to ask a couple -- just going back to work  
17 orders.  We've heard from a couple people when you -- if you are  
18 called out on a gas leak, you can't find it, then you call back to  
19 the office and tell the office person to call Alagasco?

20          A.   Well, if the office -- like I'm on-call this week.

21          Q.   Yeah.

22          A.   So if the office closed --

23          Q.   Okay.

24          A.   -- they got a gas leak, most of the time the tenant will  
25 go ahead and call Alagasco.

1 Q. Right. But when you report it to the office, who do you  
2 report it to?

3 A. We bring the work orders here and turn the work orders  
4 in.

5 Q. To? Who's the person? And LaKenya (indiscernible) --

6 A. Ms. Perry and Ms. Thomas or whoever in there. Mr. --

7 Q. Thomas?

8 A. -- Sheppard (ph.). No, Ms. Thomas ain't on this site.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Ms. Holmes. Whoever --

11 Q. Holmes, okay.

12 A. -- whoever the manager is or whatever. I mean --

13 Q. Oh, those are the managers.

14 A. -- we got a tray we turn the work orders in and they put  
15 them in the system.

16 Q. Okay. But once you've done that, you're done, right?

17 A. Yeah, we --

18 Q. And you never hear whether anyone came out or --

19 A. Oh, no, you have to secure that situation. You just  
20 can't leave them there with the gas smelling like that. I would  
21 tell them to just get out of the house and then I'll go out  
22 myself --

23 Q. Right.

24 A. -- and turn the meter off. You know, I just turn it  
25 off.

1 Q. Turn the meter off?

2 A. I have did that, turned the gas meter off. If you can't  
3 find it, that's just safer way to go, just turn it off.

4 Q. Okay. Is that something Alagasco has told you to do or  
5 you just take it upon yourself to shut the gas meter off?

6 A. Well, just shut when -- if it's real bad. I have done  
7 it before.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And just one turn and just turn it off. I mean, I --

10 Q. And where is that? On the meter? Is that --

11 A. Yeah, it's on the --

12 Q. -- what you're talking -- on that riser?

13 A. -- on the line.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. On the meter. It's a cut-off.

16 Q. Do you tag it or just leave it closed?

17 A. I mean, I don't tag it.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I mean, if they're coming, then they take it over and --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- they tag if something wrong.

22 Q. All right. But my original question was once you've  
23 passed this information off to someone in the office, it's up to  
24 the person in the office to make that phone call to Alagasco,  
25 right? You never hear anything back?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Even if I'm on-call and you can't get them, well, you  
4 could go ahead and make the phone call.

5 Q. Oh, okay. The technician could call?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Have you ever done that?

8 A. I haven't, but --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- but most of the time the tenant went and did it  
11 before we get here, I mean.

12 Q. Okay. All right.

13 BY MR. CHHATRE:

14 Q. I have one follow-up question on what Matt asked you.  
15 This is Ravi. When you turn that meter valve off and then the gas  
16 company has to come in to fix the problem, did the gas company  
17 ever told you not to do it or whatever you did is good?

18 A. That hasn't happened to me but one time and that was at  
19 Kimbrell Homes.

20 Q. Right. But --

21 A. Not this site.

22 Q. I understand.

23 A. It was a fire. It was a fire. And then I just took it  
24 my own because it was going to be bad. Gas pipe broke behind the  
25 stove and then fire was going down the wall. All I know to do,

1 run out there and turn the gas off, and it worked. Because the  
2 firemen didn't get there, 20 minutes. So that's why I said I did  
3 it that one time, but --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I had to do it.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Children were there and everything, you know.

8 Q. Sure. Okay. Thanks. I appreciate the time.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Anyone else? We're done? Okay. Thanks  
10 for coming in, Quinton. Appreciate it.

11 MR. BROWN: Okay.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: We're off the record.

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 Quinton Brown

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-14-MP-001

PLACE:                    Birmingham, Alabama

DATE:                     December 20, 2013

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.

---

Kimberly Hawkins  
Transcriber