

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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HOUSE EXPLOSION IN FIRESTONE,
COLORADO, APRIL 17, 2017

* Accident No.: DCA17FP005

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Interview of: MICHAEL REISNER

Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection
District Business & Education
Center
Longmont, Colorado

Tuesday,
May 11, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JOSEPH GRATCOFSKY, General Engineer
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

GBENGA AJIBOYE, General Engineer
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

MICHAEL LEONARD, Quality Assurance Professional
Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission

DOUG PRUNK, Fire Investigator
Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District

KELLEY DUKE, Attorney
Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District

DAVID McBRIDE, Vice President of Health, Safety &
Environment
Anadarko Petroleum Corporation

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. CHHATRE: Good afternoon. Today is Thursday, May 11,
3 2017. We are currently at Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection
4 District's Business and Education Center located at 8426 Kosmerl
5 Place, Longmont, Colorado. We are meeting regarding the
6 investigation of an explosion of a house located at 6312 Twilight
7 Avenue, Firestone, Colorado that occurred on April 17, 2017.

8 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National
9 Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C., and I'm
10 the investigator in charge of this accident. The NTSB
11 investigation number for this accident is DCA17FP005.

12 I would like to start by notifying everyone present in this
13 room that we are recording this interview and we may transcribe it
14 at a later date. Transcripts will be provided directly to the
15 interviewee for review and identifying any typographical errors.
16 The transcripts may be posted in NTSB's public docket.

17 Also, I would like to inform Battalion Chief Mike Reisner
18 that you are permitted to have one other person present with you
19 during the interview. This is a person of your choice, your
20 friend, family member, supervisor, or, if you choose, no one at
21 all. Please state for the record your full name, spelling off
22 your name, the organization you work for and your title, business
23 contact information such as mailing address, and whom you have
24 chosen to be present with you during the interview.

25 MR. REISNER: My name is Michael Reisner. I work for the

1 Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District. I'm the battalion
2 chief of B shift. What else did you want?

3 MR. CHHATRE: Your contact information that we can send this
4 transcript back to you.

5 MR. REISNER: It's the same address as the Business and
6 Education Center. I don't know that off the top of my head.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. That's fine.

8 MR. REISNER: Okay.

9 MR. CHHATRE: What I read is correct, right?

10 MS. DUKE: Yes.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Go ahead.

12 MR. REISNER: And --

13 MR. CHHATRE: Whom you have chosen to be with you.

14 MR. REISNER: Kelly with the legal counsel.

15 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. All right. Thank you for that.

16 Now I would like to go around and have each person introduce
17 themselves. Please state your name, spelling off your name, your
18 title, and the organization that you represent and your business
19 contact information. Starting from my left?

20 MR. GRATCOFSKY: My name is Joseph Gratcofsky, J-o-s-e-p-h,
21 G-r-a-t-c-o-f-s-k-y. I'm an engineer with the Department of
22 Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
23 Administration, the Western Region, out of Lakewood, Colorado. My
24 email address is [REDACTED] and my phone
25 number is [REDACTED].

1 MR. AJIBOYE: My name is Gbenga Ajiboye, spelled G-b-e-n-g-a,
2 A-j-i-b-o-y-e. I'm an engineer with PHMSA. I'm on training with
3 Joseph. My email is [REDACTED]. My
4 contact number will be [REDACTED].

5 MR. PRUNK: Doug Prunk, P-r-u-n-k, Frederick-Firestone Fire
6 Protection District; address [REDACTED], F [REDACTED],
7 [REDACTED]. Contact number is [REDACTED], and the email address
8 is [REDACTED].

9 MR. LEONARD: Mike Leonard with the Colorado Oil and Gas
10 Conservation Commission. I'm the quality assurance professional.
11 My email address, [REDACTED]. Contact
12 number is 7 [REDACTED].

13 MS. DUKE: Kelley Duke, K-e-l-l-e-y, D-u-k-e, attorney for
14 the Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District. My business
15 address is [REDACTED],
16 [REDACTED].

17 MR. McBRIDE: David McBride. That's D-a-v-i-d, McBride, M-c-
18 B-r-i-d-e. Email address is [REDACTED]
19 [REDACTED]. I'm Vice President,
20 Environmental Health and Safety at Anadarko. Contact information
21 is [REDACTED], and office is [REDACTED].

22 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much.

23 INTERVIEW OF MIKE REISNER

24 BY MR. CHHATRE:

25 Q. Chief Reisner, tell us, give us some of your background, your

1 formal/informal education, how long you've been working in the
2 field, how long you are with the district.

3 A. I've been with the fire district since 2000, November of
4 2000. I started as a captain and worked my way up. I'm battalion
5 chief now, in charge of B shift.

6 Q. And what are your duty hours?

7 A. I work 24-hour shifts, 7 a.m. to 7 a.m., a rotating Berkley
8 shift.

9 Q. 7 a.m. to 7 a.m.?

10 A. Yes, 24-hour shift.

11 Q. And so do you have a break after a shift?

12 A. Do what now?

13 Q. Do you have a break in service or you just continuously work
14 5 days with these hours? How does that work?

15 A. We work a rotating shift. There's three shifts. There's A,
16 B and C shift. So we work 24 on, 24 off; 24 on, 24 off; 24 on, 4
17 days off.

18 Q. Okay. Great. Tell us how the structure works for the
19 firemen, first, starting with your personal job and all the way up
20 to the hierarchy in the fire department.

21 A. Starting at the top would be the board of directors. Below
22 that is the fire chief. Below that would be division chiefs.
23 Below that is battalion chiefs. And then down to shift personnel,
24 which would be captains, lieutenants, and then firefighters.

25 Q. So the battalion chief, what are your responsibilities?

1 A. I manage the shift. I'm the shift -- all shift
2 responsibilities on B shift.

3 Q. Okay. Great. So tell me your involvement with the house
4 explosion that happened (indiscernible) November 17th -- I'm
5 sorry, April 17th, 2017.

6 A. That was my duty day. I was on shift that day. That was a
7 Monday, I believe. It was --

8 Q. April 17th, okay.

9 A. We got a call for a house explosion.

10 Q. And who called you?

11 A. Webb County dispatch, 911 system.

12 Q. Okay. And what is your work location?

13 A. The station locations?

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. I was at Station 131, Walnut Drive.

16 Q. 131 Walnut Street?

17 A. Drive.

18 Q. Drive. Okay.

19 A. That's Frederick.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. Now, with your work, are you permanently
21 located at this particular station or you rotate, also, with the
22 shift and with the stations?

23 A. I'm permanently located there. The battalion chiefs are
24 housed at that station.

25 Q. And how far that is from the accident scene, roughly?

1 A. About 4 to 4½ miles.

2 Q. Okay. So you get a dispatch, then what happened?

3 A. We got dispatched on a house explosion, full structure
4 response. So I responded in my -- in the district-provided
5 vehicle, command vehicle.

6 Q. And who else went with you?

7 A. Nobody in my car, just me.

8 Q. Right. But I mean did you go as a team --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- or you just went by yourself?

11 A. Yeah. Yeah, it's a structure response.

12 Q. So explain what a structure response is. What other agents
13 are included?

14 A. Well, our agency, and then along with -- we have an automatic
15 aid.

16 Q. Okay. Does that include the fire engines --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- or ladders or --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So how many units went from your location?

21 A. We had myself. We had Engine 3401. We had Ladder 3417. We
22 had Engine 3403. We had Ambulance 3421. We had Platteville-
23 Gilcrest Engine 3601.

24 Q. Okay. And all these are located at your station?

25 A. No, those are different locations, different stations.

1 Q. Okay. So what is located at your station that went to the
2 accident scene?

3 A. Engine 3401.

4 Q. Okay. And that is staffed by how many people?

5 A. That is staffed by two.

6 Q. Are your fire engines typically staffed by two people?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And what about the ladders?

9 A. Ladder 3417 responded.

10 Q. No, I mean how many people are manned on ladders?

11 A. Three, usually.

12 Q. Three. Okay. Okay. So you left your station. How long it
13 took you to reach the accident scene? Just walk me through.

14 A. I don't recall the -- my exact response time. It's drive
15 time for 4½ miles.

16 Q. Okay. No, I mean what time you left, too. Do you know what
17 time you left? I mean, if you don't, you don't.

18 A. I don't know the exact time the alarm came in. It was
19 between 4:30 and 4:45, somewhere in there.

20 Q. Okay. But these are times are recorded, right, on
21 (indiscernible)?

22 A. Yes, those times are all recorded.

23 Q. Yes. We can get those. Okay. Okay. Just tell me, walk me
24 through whatever you did on that day.

25 A. I got in my far to respond as normal for a house explosion.

1 I looked at our MDT, which is a mobile data terminal that gives us
2 information. I was seeing house explosion, multiple calls for the
3 house explosion. As I left the station, pulled out onto Colorado
4 Boulevard to head north, I could see the black plume of smoke from
5 there. I had Platteville-Gilcrest 3601, I had them respond
6 straight to the scene, over the radio. I went on to dispatch and
7 asked for a staff -- a chief recall, staff recall page for a
8 working fire, which brings additional units. And then I asked for
9 an additional engine and ambulance from Mountain View Fire, which
10 I was assigned Engine 2201 and Ambulance 2221.

11 Q. Ambulance 20 --

12 A. 2221.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. They were assigned to that, also. While en route, our
15 station, 3, is close to the scene, he gave a -- Don gave a radio
16 report update when leaving the station that there was heavy -- I
17 don't recall the exact words. Heavy fire, house was leveled, he
18 could see that from the station. So --

19 Q. Okay. So Station 3 is that close?

20 A. Yes. He went arrival, Don did.

21 Q. And what's Don's last name?

22 A. Ogborn. He's a lieutenant.

23 Q. How do you spell it?

24 A. O-g-b-o-r-n.

25 Q. Okay. Okay.

1 A. He went arrival and established a water supply over the
2 radio, established Twilight command. After he was there for a few
3 minutes, he advised over the radio that there would be a patient
4 in the north, I think the northeast corner of the construction
5 area.

6 I went arrival and I did, over the radio, a verification of
7 what he had already established, water supply, what he was doing,
8 putting water on the fire, and then I upgraded command, went
9 through dispatch and upgraded command.

10 Q. What does that mean?

11 A. So incident command was mine at that point.

12 Q. Okay. When you say upgrade the command, you mean now you
13 took charge?

14 A. I took charge. After I verified what he had established and
15 done already, then I took command.

16 Q. Okay. Now, you said something earlier about getting the --
17 you used a term I'm trying to locate her. Radio dispatched water
18 or established water. What does that mean?

19 A. That means they connected a hose to a fire hydrant to the
20 fire truck to establish a water supply.

21 Q. So you don't need to call anybody to do that, do you?

22 A. No, we just say it over the air so everybody knows.

23 Q. Knows that the water has been connected.

24 A. That they weren't operating just off of tank water on the
25 engine, they were operating off of a fire hydrant and they have a

1 sustained water supply then.

2 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Then what happened?

3 A. Engine 3401 went arrival, came in from a different direction,
4 established their own water supply. Both fire engines were
5 putting water on the fire, utilizing the master stream, the deck
6 gun that's on the engine, the big deck gun, and then they were
7 using master stream devices also. They were putting water on the
8 main fire building, which was the house that exploded, and they
9 were putting water on the exposure house on the delta side, which
10 would have been the west side. Because at that point we had
11 extension of fire to the outside of that structure.

12 Q. So tell me, when you arrived, what did you see at the ground
13 zero scene? Describe it to me.

14 A. A fully involved house. It had collapsed.

15 Q. So, when you reached, the house had already collapsed?

16 A. Yes, the house was collapsed. The house was fully involved
17 in fire.

18 Q. Okay. Did you smell any gas?

19 A. I did not.

20 Q. Okay. Go ahead and continue. I didn't mean to interrupt
21 your story but I (indiscernible).

22 A. No, that's fine. Fire Chief Posiweck (ph), he was arrival
23 not too far behind me. I had assigned him to conduct a 360, which
24 is an incident commander that walks 360 degrees around the scene
25 to look for any -- just give a report back on conditions.

1 Q. So at that time the fire chief has taken the command from
2 you?

3 A. No, sir. He never took command from me.

4 Q. Okay. Go ahead.

5 A. He conducted a 360 for me. Nothing special was noted. There
6 was no rescues at that point to be made, so we continued to
7 extinguish the fire on the main fire building and the exposure
8 house. Mount View 2201 contacted me on the radio. I had them
9 respond to the construction site where the apartment buildings
10 were. I had them access the site from that side, which would be
11 the Charlie side. Their battalion chief, which would be 2260, he
12 responded with them, also. He continued into that same area.

13 Chief Prunk had contacted me on the radio. He was in that
14 same area. So everybody, they were all on the Charlie side and
15 advised they did have a patient there, a female patient. And I
16 don't remember who, I just know over the radio that somebody had
17 ordered a helicopter. And I'm not sure, I think -- I don't know
18 who ordered the helicopter.

19 I assigned Mountain View 2260 to assist with helicopter
20 landing so the patient could get evacuated out. And Chief Prunk
21 was performing medical with that patient. I had our ambulance,
22 3421, respond to that location in that construction zone on the
23 Charlie side, also, to assist with -- to take patient care. That
24 was the only patient that I had been informed of at that time. So
25 we continued to put water on the fire, both the exposure house and

1 the main fire house.

2 Platteville-Gilcrest Engine 3601 contacted me on the radio
3 upon their arrival. I had them park their truck out of the way,
4 bring their crew and equipment up to the scene, to incident
5 command, and I assigned them to the exposure house to take a hand
6 line and check for fire extension and perform a primary search of
7 that house, the delta exposure house.

8 So they took a hand line off of Engine 3403 to the exposure
9 house and entered that. Three people entered, performed a primary
10 search and checked for any fire extension into that house. Ladder
11 3417 performed -- controlled the utilities on that house, turned
12 off the electric and the gas. I got an all clear from the primary
13 search. There was one dog that was evacuated.

14 They pulled ceiling on the division 2, which would be the
15 second floor into the attic area. They pulled some ceiling to
16 check for fire extension and overhaul the fire from there. The
17 water from the outside had taken care of the fire problem, so they
18 never had to use any water inside the house.

19 Q. That is delta house? Sorry.

20 A. Excuse me?

21 Q. That will be the house on the --

22 A. West side.

23 Q. West side.

24 A. The exposure house, yes. After the patient was evacuated, I
25 know our ambulance took the patient to our station, No. 3,

1 transported them by ground. The helicopter met them there and
2 they transported that patient. I had the engine crew from
3 Mountain View, the 2201 crew, I had them go to the roof of that
4 exposure house and cut a hole in the roof, check for any
5 extension. There was none reported. And continued to extinguish
6 and cool the main fire building.

7 Q. So, can you estimate how much time at this stage you have
8 been at the accident scene?

9 A. To that point, probably an hour, maybe, total.

10 Q. Okay. So the fire is still going on one hour into the
11 incident?

12 A. Oh, yeah. Yes.

13 Q. But it's not responding to your water, is that correct?

14 A. It did respond to the water, but we still had a lot of
15 hotspots, yes. The main fire had went out, but there was
16 hotspots, yes.

17 Q. Okay. Okay.

18 A. So we continued to cool. I advised our dispatch center -- it
19 was before this point I had advised our dispatch center to have
20 Black Hills Energy, which is the provider for the natural gas for
21 these homes, and I had United Power, also, who does the electric,
22 both respond to control utilities.

23 Q. And (indiscernible) power (indiscernible) which --

24 A. United Power does electric.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. McBRIDE:

2 A. So upon United Power, their technician that arrived on scene,
3 I had him disconnect power to both of those buildings, the main
4 fire building and the exposure.

5 Q. Okay. And which gas company did you call?

6 A. Black Hills Energy.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Upon their arrival, I had them do the same, control the gas
9 to the exposure home. They were not able, due to the amount of
10 damage and the fire still burning, to do anything at that point
11 with the main fire building.

12 Q. So they are just on a standby mode at this time?

13 A. Yes. I had the crew that was in the exposure house take a
14 four-gas monitor into that house to check for any readings. We
15 were getting some CO readings still, but we did not get any LEL
16 readings.

17 Q. That's inside the house?

18 A. That was inside the exposure house.

19 Q. So you did an air sample, or do you just go into the room and
20 you're measuring it, or how did that work?

21 A. Yeah, it's a four-gas detector, yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And we did not have any significant readings on that at all,
24 so we were still just continuing to cool all the hotspots on that
25 main fire building. As soon as Chief Prunk got done with his

1 assignment on the Charlie side, I assigned him to the operations
2 of the scene. So he took over operations. I was still incident
3 command, though.

4 I had assigned a safety officer early on into the scene, our
5 training captain. He responded from here, also. When he arrived
6 on scene, I made him the safety. So he was in charge of all
7 safety and he pretty much walks the scene, 360-ing the whole time,
8 looks for any safety issues and advises back to me.

9 Dave Puccetti, he responded. I'm not sure from where, but he
10 did respond. Upon his arrival, I gave him an update of what we
11 had done to this point, and he took over the fire investigation.

12 I was advised, and I don't know what time it was, by
13 Firestone PD, and I don't remember who, that there was possibly
14 two people in the main fire building, but it was not verified for
15 sure.

16 Q. Because?

17 A. It was just they were told that -- somebody told the police
18 department there was possibly two people in the basement, so --

19 Q. But you said they probably did not survive. I'm just asking
20 you based on the fire or damage or how did you reach that
21 conclusion that that they probably did not survive?

22 A. Oh, I didn't say that they wouldn't survive.

23 Q. Oh, okay. I heard it wrong then.

24 A. Yeah. I didn't know for sure if there was anybody in the
25 basement. Nobody could verify and confirm that without doubt.

1 Q. Okay. Good. Okay. What happened next? Whatever you can
2 recall. I mean, I know it's almost 3 weeks ago and probably
3 several other incidences ago.

4 A. I called for a unit from Longmont Fire to come out. They
5 bring an air truck, started refilling bottles for us, like a
6 support unit. Yeah, we just continued to cool hotspots per the
7 fire investigator.

8 Q. So hotspots are still going on?

9 A. Hotspots are still going, yes. There was one spot that was
10 in the basement of this house, the main fire building, that it
11 would not go out. We would put water on it from an aerial device
12 and it would die down, and then it would pop right back up.

13 Q. Do you remember where that was?

14 A. It was -- I don't know exactly. It was more towards the
15 middle kind of area of the basement. It wasn't by one of the
16 walls.

17 Q. Let me see if this works, because I just -- we just got the
18 survey finished yesterday, and if I can locate it. Go ahead and
19 tell me your story, but in the meantime I'll see if that can help
20 us a little bit.

21 A. Jerry Means (ph) from CBI I know had responded. I'm not sure
22 who called the CBI, but he did respond. I know Jerry, so when he
23 arrived I gave him an update of what we had, what I had done to
24 that point. So I know he worked with Dave. Once Dave was there,
25 they worked together.

1 Q. I'm listening. Go ahead and tell. I just want to see if I
2 can show you a drawing.

3 (Pause.)

4 And how long -- what is the time by that time, if you
5 remember? If you don't --

6 A. I don't remember.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Jerry, and this was later that night, while he was walking
9 the perimeter of that building after the smoke and fire had died
10 down enough, he was walking that scene and did think that he was
11 able to see a body in one of the window wells on the east side of
12 that basement. Investigators decided, you know, we decided -- the
13 investigators decided it was safe enough to put a ladder down into
14 the basement now and send -- we sent our safety officer down into
15 the basement to verify that that was a body. And it was, but it
16 was not moved at that point. He came back out.

17 Q. Do you remember what time that was?

18 A. I do not.

19 Q. Okay. Here is the survey drawing. This is your ground zero
20 building in here. Can you see where the hotspots were, roughly?

21 A. One hotspot would have been -- where's the street at? Is
22 this the driveway?

23 Q. Yeah, that's right.

24 A. So right in this area. There was a large collapse there and
25 there was a lot of fire underneath all that collapse that we

1 couldn't get to.

2 Q. For the transcriber, just read whatever it says here, if you
3 can.

4 A. Do what now?

5 Q. Just read where you see the hotspot, anything that you can
6 read here just so that we'll know in transcription as to where --

7 A. Whatever this little square is right there. Whatever that
8 is. I don't know what that is, but in this area there was a lot
9 of collapse there, probably from the second and first floor, a lot
10 of fire that was underneath there.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Do you see the other picture (indiscernible)?
12 That has appliances and describes something in there that might be
13 better for me to show.

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. Now, how many house explosions or fires you have seen,
16 something like this, in your very long --

17 A. Like this one, none.

18 Q. None. How many house fires or explosions you have seen?

19 A. I don't know.

20 Q. Well, this is not the first one, is it, for you?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Try this one.

22 MR. CHHATRE: Ah, okay. Now, this might be better for you.
23 And for the record, we are looking at a survey drawing that was
24 done yesterday.

25 MR. REISNER: All right, which way am I looking here? The

1 front --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The street is to your right.

3 MR. REISNER: I got it.

4 BY MR. CHHATRE:

5 Q. You can move here if it's easier for you.

6 A. So kind of where this arrow would be pointing, 50-gallon
7 water heater, kind of this whole big area.

8 Q. Okay, that's where the hotspots were?

9 A. Yeah, all underneath the collapsed debris.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then the other hotspot that we had that would not go out
12 would have been somewhere in the area where it says homeowner's
13 body location, the words, not the arrow.

14 Q. Right. Okay. Where the words are, that's another hotspot?

15 A. Yeah, there was a spot there that would not go out.

16 Q. Anything different you notice in that -- in this fire when
17 you arrived, or later on, it is a different color, the flames are
18 too high?

19 A. Just that that was like a blue-looking fire from -- I don't
20 know what it was from, but it was -- you put the water on it and
21 then it'd just pop right back up.

22 Q. So, typically, what a house fire should look like? How would
23 that look like if this is unusual, the blue color? How the
24 normal -- in other cases the fire should look like?

25 A. Well, the fire that was over underneath all the debris was

1 more of a normal-looking fire.

2 Q. So describe us. How does that look?

3 A. Yellowish, reddish flames.

4 Q. Yellowish, reddish flame. Okay.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. But that is something you noticed, that the color is
7 different and it's not all going away?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay, go ahead.

10 A. Like I said, they went down, verified that that was a body in
11 the window well, and came back out. I started having the crews
12 start putting their units back in service. We left one unit there
13 all night. All the other units went back in service. We left the
14 fire chief, Posiweck, he stayed on scene with an overtime crew to
15 monitor and continue to put out hotspots.

16 Q. Okay. And then you left?

17 A. Yes, I went back in service, also, and that was, it was after
18 midnight.

19 Q. Okay. And then did you ever go back to the scene again?

20 A. I went back the next morning.

21 Q. Okay. Let me back up. So, when you left, who was the
22 incident commander at that time?

23 A. Fire Chief Posiweck.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. The investigation was with Dave Puccetti. I believe he went

1 home, also, and the fire chief stayed there to monitor, and they
2 continued to put out hotspots as they popped up.

3 Q. So, the next day, you come in, what happens the next day?

4 A. I was relieved on shift, so I went off duty. I responded out
5 to the scene to see if they needed any assistance with anything.
6 I was asked to go, I don't know the address, a street over and
7 look at the basement and do a sketch of that basement because it
8 was the exact same layout home. So I responded to that house. I
9 don't know the address, asked for permission.

10 MR. CHHATRE: We have that (indiscernible) it could have come
11 into us, right?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

14 MR. REISNER: What's that?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have it documented (indiscernible).

16 MR. REISNER: Okay. So I went to that residence, asked for
17 permission, was given permission, went in the basement, sketched
18 out kind of dimensions and where things were located. It was an
19 unfinished basement, also. I returned back to the scene; then I
20 went back with Chief Prunk, Dave Puccetti, Jerry Means, and I'm
21 not -- one of the officers that was taking pictures.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chris Ross.

23 MR. REISNER: Chris Ross.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A photographer.

25 MR. REISNER: Photographer. We went back to that house.

1 They wanted to see the physical basement, also, so returned back
2 to the scene. After that, I got in my vehicle and went home.

3 Q. Okay. So you're not there a whole day?

4 A. No.

5 Q. So tell me, an incident like this, who decides who's going to
6 take commands? Is there a protocol that says --

7 A. First arriving unit will establish command. So whoever that
8 would be will be established command from our agency, and then the
9 first arriving officer, if there's not an officer already on
10 scene, will take it, and then a chief officer from that. Myself
11 being a battalion chief, I took -- I relieved command from
12 Lieutenant Ogborn.

13 Q. So, essentially, who is at a higher rank assumes the command?
14 Is that a correct way of saying it or it's not?

15 A. Yes. At my level, when it gets to a chief officer, another
16 chief officer will not always come in and take command from them.

17 Q. Okay. The person above you can come in and take command?

18 A. They could, yes.

19 Q. They could, but not --

20 A. Not always.

21 Q. Not always. Anything else you want to add and tell me that
22 maybe I did not ask, anything that will help us, the source of
23 fuel, what might have caused it?

24 A. We had the gas company checking the area, so all the
25 utilities were controlled.

1 Q. Now, you said people went and turned the gas off. Are you
2 allowed to do that and are you trained to do that? How does that
3 work?

4 A. Yeah, we're on a -- the exposure home? Yeah, I had a crew
5 actually turn the gas valve off to the house, yes.

6 Q. Who trained you to do this work? Because the operator
7 normally would come in and turn the gas off, right?

8 A. Say that again?

9 Q. Who trains the firefighters to do something that normally the
10 gas operators would be doing, turning the gas off?

11 A. Well, the gas company, we have training classes through the
12 gas company.

13 Q. That's what I'm asking.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. So how many training classes were there?

16 A. How many have I been to? Oh, I don't know how many classes
17 I've been to.

18 Q. Too many or too few?

19 A. The right amount.

20 Q. Okay. Now, the gas company comes and shows you, your staff,
21 your people, how to do this, turning on and off of gas?

22 A. Yes. It's just a quarter-turn valve at the meter.

23 Q. Okay. Okay. So, what happens if this is just a fire
24 response, not an explosion like this? You turn the gas off, take
25 care of the fire, now you turn the gas on again? How does that

1 work?

2 A. No, sir, we do not turn the gas back on once it's turned off.
3 Once we turn the utilities off, they have to be turned on again by
4 the supplier, whether it be electric or gas.

5 Q. Now, by protocol and the procedure, when you hear this radio
6 call about a house explosion, how will the operator will know
7 there is an explosion? Does the fire department call them, 911
8 calls? Who calls the operator to show up at a location?

9 A. The people that lived in the neighborhood. I couldn't tell
10 you how many calls they had to 911 for this incident, but --

11 Q. No, no, I'm saying, in this, Black Hills is the provider of
12 natural gas in the area, right?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. And you said Black Hills folks were on the scene?

15 A. Yes. I called them.

16 Q. Oh, you called. That's what I was asking.

17 A. I didn't physically call them. I called our dispatch center
18 and had them contact them to respond.

19 Q. Sure. But you initiated the process?

20 A. Yes, I initiated, yes.

21 Q. So you called them.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And do you remember how quickly they came? You know,
24 you're not watching your clock --

25 A. I do not know how long it took them.

1 Q. Okay. But not unusually quickly or unusually late?

2 A. No. They're usually pretty quick.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. That's all I have. Questions for you,
4 PHMSA?

5 MR. GRATCOFSKY: No, nothing right now.

6 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have no questions.

8 MR. PRUNK: Just for clarification.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Identify.

10 MR. PRUNK: Can you explain our operating of command?

11 MR. CHHATRE: Identify yourself.

12 MR. PRUNK: Huh?

13 MR. CHHATRE: Identify yourself.

14 MR. PRUNK: I'm sorry. Doug Prunk, Frederick-Firestone.

15 BY MR. PRUNK:

16 Q. There was questions about the upgrading and maybe why Chief
17 Posiweck would not have taken command. Could you explain on that?

18 A. Like I say, the first arriving unit as it comes on scene is
19 automatically going to be command, whether they're a
20 firefighter -- it could be anybody. Whoever's there has to
21 initiate command and they're going to be in charge until a higher-
22 ranking officer or whoever the next higher-ranking person is can
23 come in and relieve them.

24 That was myself. As a battalion chief, I came in, verified
25 his tactics and what his strategy was at that point; then I tell

1 everybody on the fire ground, over the radio, that I now have
2 command. I call dispatch center and I left them know that I have
3 upgraded. When I say upgraded command, I have taken command of
4 the scene.

5 And like I said earlier, being a chief officer, I'm trained
6 to be in incident command of that. A higher-ranking officer
7 showing up on the scene doesn't automatically take command.

8 Q. Did you assign Chief Posiweck, or was he assigned to anything
9 that night?

10 A. He was just assigned -- he was just helping me, basically.
11 He was a helper.

12 Q. Okay.

13 MR. CHHATRE: That helps. I'm glad.

14 MR. PRUNK: Yeah. And that's a standard practice.

15 MR. REISNER: He was dealing with the police departments and
16 the -- kind of that piece between myself and them so I'm not
17 getting all the questions. He fields them for me so I can
18 concentrate on the incident itself. So he did not have an
19 official title, I guess, assigned to him. I did assign safety,
20 which is an official position, so -- and operations. That was an
21 official position.

22 BY MR. PRUNK:

23 Q. During the event, as the incident commander, where did you
24 spend the bulk of your time of the event?

25 A. At my command vehicle.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. So that's kind of your office?

2 MR. REISNER: Yes, that's my mobile office, yes.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. So, when you say as you --

4 I'm sorry, go ahead.

5 MR. PRUNK: No, you're fine. That was actually -- that was
6 the last question just for clarification.

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. So if a higher-ranking officer comes and they say, well, I am
9 taking over the command and they announce that they are taking
10 over the command now, do they have to give any reason for that?
11 When you take over, do you have to give any reason as to why you
12 are taking over?

13 A. The first arriving engine company, the lieutenant on that
14 fire engine was command. So, once I got there, I took command
15 where I can get a bigger picture and control the scene and he then
16 can take his crew and concentrate on hose lines and exposures and
17 the fire itself.

18 Q. Is this really a standard practice?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Now, what happens if a person above your rank comes to the
21 accident scene and assumes command? Now command is already
22 transferred a third time. Does that person have to give a reason
23 why they are taking over from you?

24 A. They don't have to give a reason but they would. There'd
25 have to be a good reason for them to take command from you. If

1 the scene was expanding, that way you can go -- they can take the
2 scene, I could -- that officer could then go become operations.

3 So if the --

4 Q. Now, does that make you feel uncomfortable that you are
5 asking a person above you rank-wise to do some work, you're
6 assigning them work?

7 A. No, not at all.

8 Q. Good. Okay. Thanks.

9 MR. CHHATRE: That's all I have. Any follow-up questions?

10 (No response.)

11 Okay, if not -- what, you have one here? Oh.

12 MR. McBRIDE: One or two, that's it.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Go ahead. Go ahead.

14 MR. McBRIDE: Thank you.

15 MR. CHHATRE: I thought you said no. That's why --

16 MR. McBRIDE: No, I'm sorry. This is David McBride.

17 BY MR. McBRIDE:

18 Q. Michael, I appreciate what you guys did. I know you
19 mentioned this, about the safety officer, but who was the safety
20 officer on site?

21 A. Captain Venable, who's our training officer.

22 Q. Okay. Captain Venable. That's right.

23 A. I assigned him as safety officer.

24 Q. And can you just expand a little bit about -- I'm assuming
25 that you guys use, like, an ICS framework --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- on your incident command structure for how your command
3 systems work and everything, but I think it might help just to
4 clarify a little bit around how the responsibilities are assigned,
5 and then once you get the training on those responsibilities, why
6 that, you know, normal chain of command doesn't apply anymore when
7 you're in an ICS rollout type of a framework.

8 A. Say that again.

9 Q. Well, I mean, my understanding of ICS framework is once you
10 train in certain roles, like an incident commander role, you're
11 trained in subservient roles, that your normal, you know,
12 reporting hierarchies don't necessarily apply strictly anymore.

13 A. True.

14 Q. So you're in ICS framework then and you're responding in a
15 particular, you know, framework that you train on, and that's the
16 way you're supposed to train on so your boss can't just walk in
17 and say okay, you can go home, I'm taking over.

18 A. Exactly.

19 Q. Because you train specifically for those roles, is that
20 right?

21 A. That's correct. And like I said earlier, the only reason
22 that a higher-ranking chief officer would come in and take
23 command, if it was an expanding scene that needed additional --
24 like an operations chief or something like that.

25 Q. So there would have to be a really good reason?

1 A. Yes. The reason I upgraded command from our fire engines is
2 to let them do their job then. It relieves them of the incident
3 command so that they can take the tactical assignments that I'm
4 giving and get those accomplished.

5 Q. That's a very structured protocol, right?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Do you all have all that documented and you all train on that
8 regularly?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. How often do you all do that?

11 A. Oh, daily. I mean, it's -- we use the Incident Command
12 System on everything from medical calls to car accidents to fires.

13 MR. McBRIDE: Yeah, that's all I have. I just wanted to
14 clarify that.

15 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. No, and that helped. That definitely
16 helped.

17 Anybody have any questions? If not, thank you so much for
18 stopping and helping us on a very, very short notice.

19 MR. REISNER: You bet.

20 MR. CHHATRE: We appreciate your help.

21 MR. REISNER: You bet.

22 MR. CHHATRE: Do you want to add anything that we did not ask
23 but you think might help us?

24 MR. REISNER: No, sir.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Great. Thanks again.

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MR. REISNER: Thank you.

MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: HOUSE EXPLOSION IN FIRESTONE,
 COLORADO, APRIL 17, 2017
 Interview of Michael Reisner

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA17FP005

PLACE: Longmont, Colorado

DATE: May 11, 2017

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.



Lisa
Transcriber