

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**  
**Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investigations**  
**Washington, DC 20594**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**City of Bellingham Police Department Complaint Report**

**(Fire Investigation June 10, 1999)**

1. NO. ARRESTEE ADULT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JUVENILE <input type="checkbox"/>		2. OBS. DISP. CALL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		3. OFFENSE / EVENT DESCRIPTION <b>FIRE INVESTIGATION</b>				4. EVT. NO. <b>99B-20259</b>	
5. LAST KNOWN SECURE ON				6. DISCOVERED / OBSERVED ON				7. REPORTED ON	
MO.	DA.	YR.	DOW.	TIME	MO.	DA.	YR.	DOW.	TIME

GENERAL LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE: **WHATCOM FALLS PARK**

3. SPECIFIC LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE: **WHATCOM FALLS PARK**

0. CODE: V-VICTIM C-CONTACT (INITIALED DISCLOSURE OK, WRITE NAME BELOW)  DO NOT DISCLOSE  OK TO DISCLOSE

CODE	LAST NAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	DOB	SEX	RACE	AGE
NO.							

RES/BUS ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP RES/BUS. PHONE (AREA CODE)

CODE	LAST NAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	DOB	SEX	RACE	AGE
NO.							

RES/BUS ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP RES/BUS. PHONE (AREA CODE)

11. CODE: A-ARRESTEE (LIST MULTIPLE CHARGES IN SUMMARY) CIRCLE COSE IF ADDITIONAL PAGES NEEDED

CODE	LAST NAME	FIRST	MIDDLE	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	RACE	AGE
NO.							

RES/BUS ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP WARRANT OR CIT. NO. RES/BUS. PHONE (AREA CODE)

OBSERVABLE PHYSICAL ODDITIES AKA HAIR EYES HT. WT. DR. LIC. NO. STATE

12. VEHICLE 13. STOLEN PROPERTY STATEMENT

<input type="checkbox"/> USED IN CRIME	<input type="checkbox"/> STOLEN	<input type="checkbox"/> RECOVERED	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/> MOTOR VEHICLE	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER PROPERTY	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH
<input type="checkbox"/> VICTIM VEH	<input type="checkbox"/> DAMAGED	<input type="checkbox"/> ABANDONED		I, the undersigned, hereby declare this to be a true and correct report: I am the owner or person in legal possession of the reported property and I did not give any permission to use or take this property. I (will) (will not) testify in court, under oath, to the facts herein. I understand that I may be charged with an offense, "Obstructing a Public Officer" (RCW 9A.76.020), by filing a false report which hinders, obstructs, or delays a public officer.		
YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	COLOR(S)	SIGNATURE X		
LICENSE NO.	ST	VIN/FRAME		JUVENILE ARRESTEE INFORMATION		
REGISTERED OWNER				IF PRIOR ARREST, WHERE?		

14. IMPOUND  VEHICLE  EVIDENCE  SAFEKEEPING

IMPOUND/EVIDENCE NUMBERS

NO. OFF. INVOLVED	<input type="checkbox"/> EQUIP. MAL.	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	PARENTS NOTIFIED OF ARREST?	PARENTS NOTIFIED OF DETENTION?
	<input type="checkbox"/> EMP. ERROR	<input type="checkbox"/> FALSE ALARM SHEET	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

ADDITIONAL COPIES TO: *del 5* NOTIFICATION BY OFFICER DATE TIME

PROPERTY (TOTAL VALUE) RECOVERED-\$ STOLEN-\$ DAMAGED-\$

DISCLOSABLE VICTIM/BUSINESS ADDRESS

SUMMARY

**BELLINGHAM FIRE DEPT. REQUESTED POLICE HELP AT THE ABOVE LOCATION WITH A FUEL SPILL IN WHATCOM CREEK. OFFICERS WERE STARTING TO EVACUATE THE AREA WHEN THE FUEL IGNITED AND EXPLODED.**

15. REPORTING OFFICER: **D. RICHARDS** COMP. **11** 16. REVIEWING OFFICER: **MR** CONF. NO. **11**

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION Not to be released to anyone without prior approval of BELLINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

EVENT NO.

OFFENSE/EVENT DESCRIPTION <b>FIRE INVESTIGATION</b>	DATE <b>6-10-99</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONT. NARRATION <input type="checkbox"/> FOLLOWUP ONLY	EVENT NUMBER <b>99B-20259</b>
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20. CODE: LIST 1 THROUGH 6 BELOW - USE N/A IF NOT APPLICABLE.

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|---|--|
| 1. RECONSTRUCT INCIDENT AND DESCRIBE INVESTIGATION.<br>2. VICTIM'S INJURIES - DETAILS AND WHERE MEDICAL EXAM OCCURRED.<br>3. PROPERTY DAMAGED - DESCRIBE AND INDICATE AMOUNT OF LOSS.<br>4. IF SIGNIFICANT, DESCRIBE VEHICLE. | 5. IDENTIFY UNDEVELOPED LEADS.<br>6. LIST STATEMENTS TAKEN.<br>7. LIST PERSONS FROM WHOM STATEMENTS NEED TO BE TAKEN LATER.<br>8. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE - DETAIL WHAT AND WHERE FOUND, BY WHOM, AND DISPOSITION. |
|---|--|

ADDITIONAL COPIES TO:

NARRATIVE

THE BELLINGHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUESTED  
HELP FROM BELLINGHAM PD AT WOBURN ST.  
AND IOWA STREET. BFD HAD BEEN CALLED  
TO THAT LOCATION ON A REPORT OF GASOLINE  
FAMES IN THE CREEK AREA.

OFFICER DAVID WRIGHT ARRIVED ON SCENE  
AND STARTED TO SET UP A PERIMETER. OFFICERS  
M. YOUNG AND H. BARNETTE ALSO ARRIVED  
TO ASSIST. OFC. WRIGHT ARRIVED AT 1630 HOURS.

I ARRIVED ABOUT 1655 AND FIRST SPOKE  
WITH A BELLINGHAM FIREFIGHTER WHO HAD  
JUST CHECKED EXPLOSIVE LEVELS AT THE BRIDGE  
AT VALENCIA ST. THIS FIREFIGHTER TOLD  
ME THE LEVELS WERE EXTREMELY HIGH AND DANGEROUS.  
HE TOLD ME THE WATER IN THE CREEK WAS  
RUNNING AN AMBER COLOR AND WAS FULL  
OF PETROLEUM. HE SAID WE HAD TO CLEAR  
VALENCIA ST. AND KEEP VEHICLES OFF THE  
BRIDGE. I REQUESTED BOTH PATROL LIEUTENANTS BE CALLED.

OFFICER D. WRIGHT ARRIVED AND TOOK OVER  
TRAFFIC CONTROL AT VALENCIA ST. I WENT  
TO BFD'S FIRE COMMAND POST AT IOWA  
AND WOBURN ST. I CONTACTED BATT.  
CHIEF R. MOREHOUSE THERE.

CHIEF MOREHOUSE ASKED ME TO START  
EVACUATING A ZONE 150' TO 200' ON

REPORTING OFFICER

D. RICHARDS

3111

REVIEWING OFFICER

EVENT NUMBER

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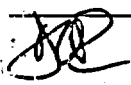
EACH SIDE (NORTH & SOUTH SIDES) OF WHATCOM CREEK FROM WOBURN ST. TO THE MOUTH OF THE CREEK AT MARITIME HERITAGE PARK ALONG WITH THAT CHIEF MOREHOUSE REQUESTED THAT BPD BLOCK OFF ALL ROADS CROSSING THE CREEK IN THIS SAME AREA.

I NOTIFIED DISPATCH TO CLEAR ALL BPD OFFICERS FROM NON-EMERGENCY CALLS AND HAVE THEM MEET ME AT FRANZ BAKERY AT IOWA ST. AND ASKED FOR WCSO HELP.

L. R. SUCEE ARRIVED AND I ADVISED HIM OF OUR SITUATION. WE DISCUSSED A PLAN TO EVACUATE WOBURN TO I-5 FIRST.

L. SUCEE REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM WSP AND STARTED TO WORK ON A PLAN TO USE WCSO AND WSP WHEN THEY ARRIVED.

I SPOKE WITH CHIEF MOREHOUSE AGAIN, HE EXPLAINED THAT A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF FUEL WAS IN THE WATER, IT WAS MORE THAN A FIVE GALLON CAN OR 55 GALLON DRUM. THE ONLY SOURCE IN THE AREA WAS THE PIPELINE NEAR THE WATER TREATMENT PLANT. THIS WAS BEING CHECKED INTO BY FIRE COMMAND.

REPORTING OFFICER <b>S. RICHARDS #111</b>	REVIEWING OFFICER 	EVENT NUMBER
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OFFENSE/EVENT DESCRIPTION

FIRE INVESTIGATION

DATE

6-10-99

CONT. NARRATION

FOLLOWUP ONLY

EVENT NUMBER

99B-20259

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Sgt. C. EMMETT ARRIVED TO HELP COORDINATE OUR OFFICERS.

JUST THEN I FELT A THUMP & HEARD A DULL EXPLOSION BEHIND ME INSIDE WHATCOM FALLS PARK. I TURNED AND HEARD A SECOND EXPLOSION, THEN A THIRD AND THEN SAW A WALL OF FLAMES RISING IN THE CREEK BELOW THE GRAVEL PITT OFF VIRGINIA ST. THE FLAMES WERE FOLLOWED BY A 4TH, VERY LARGE EXPLOSION.

THIS EXPLOSION CAUSED A HUGE FIRE WALL THAT ROSE STRAIGHT UP AND THEN BLOSSOMED OUT 200' TO 300' FEET. THE WALL OF FIRE CAME WEST TOWARDS US RAPIDLY. I ESTIMATED ITS HEIGHT AT 700 TO 1,000 FEET.

I STARTED GETTING GARS BURNED AWAY FROM THE FIREBALL AND THEN GOT INTO MY PATROL CAR AND REQUESTED ALL BPD UNITS USE THEIR PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS TO EVACUATE THE CREEK AREA IMMEDIATELY. I THEN DROVE WEST ON JOWA ST. USING MY PA. SYSTEM TO WARN PEOPLE OF THE DANGER IN THE 200' ZONE

THE FIRE SPREAD RAPIDLY WEST DOWN THE CREEK AND FLAMES APPEARED TO BE 200' TO 300' HIGH WITH A SMOKE PLUME SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET HIGHER.

REPORTING OFFICER

D. RICHARDS #111

REVIEWING OFFICER

*[Signature]*

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I REACHED STATE ST. AT 400K ST. AND REASSESSSED THE SITUATION. IT APPEARED THE FIRE HAD STOPPED JUST EAST OF I-5 BEHIND POLLY RU SALES. IT LOOKED AS IF IT WAS STATIC AT THIS POINT.

I ADVISED RESPONDING OFFICERS, DETECTIVES, DEPUTIES AND OTHERS TO BLOCK ROADWAYS OVER THE CREEK, IF THEY WERE NOT IN THE PROCESS OF EVACUATING BUILDINGS.

I THEN WORKED MY WAY BACK TO WOBURN AND BOWAY I SET UP A POLICE COMMAND POST. AT 1130 HOURS I DID A RADIO ROLL CALL OF POLICE UNITS ON SCENE & AVAILABLE. BPD HAD 29 OFFICERS WORKING THE INCIDENT WHICH INCLUDED COMMAND STAFF, DETECTIVES, TRAFFIC AND PATROL. ALL 2200 SHIFT OFFICERS WERE CALLED IN EARLY TO TAKE ALL CALLS.

THE WHATCOM COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE HAD 10 TO 15 PEOPLE ON SCENE; WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY POLICE, FERNDALE POLICE AND THE STATE PATROL. ALL HAD OFFICERS WHO RESPONDED TO HELP. SKAGIT COUNTY'S WSP DETACHMENT SUPPLIED TROOPERS TO ASSIST ALSO.

AN INCIDENT LOG WAS STARTED AFTER THE ROLL CALL BY OFF. D. WRIGHT. THE LOG IS ATTACHED. AND COVERS BPD'S WORK UP TO

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2010 HOURS WHEN I STARTED TO RELEASE PERSONNEL AND RE-ASSIGN PERSONNEL TO OTHER DUTIES.

OFF D. WRIGHT WAS ASSIGNED CRIME SCENE DUTIES.

WCSO SEARCH + RESCUE COORDINATOR Dep. A. SMITH ARRIVED WITH A SEARCH PARTY AND STARTED TO SEARCH THE BLAST AREA FOR VICTIMS.

SAR FOUND A MALE VICTIM JUST BEFORE DARKNESS. THE VICTIM WAS DECEASED + FOUND IN THE CREEK HALF SUBMURGED JUST WEST OF THE ST. CLAIR ST. TRAIL END.

CRIME SCENE UNIT SUPERVISOR R. NOLTE WAS ADVISED AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE TO HAVE SAR ASSIST RECSU WITH THEIR INVESTIGATION + REMOVAL OF THE BODY. THE REMOVAL WAS COMPLETED JUST PAST 2400 HOURS.

AT 0200 HOURS (6-11-99) I OPENED ALL ROADWAYS EXCEPT WOBURN + VALENCIA STREETS AT THAT TIME.

AT 0205 I SENT TRAFFIC OFF-LEAVE TO

REPORTING OFFICER <b>RICHARDS #111</b>	REVIEWING OFFICER 
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check the park's parking areas for a general motors vehicle - the victim had a GM key on his person. Ofc. Leake found a Jeep Cherokee parked in Whatcom Falls Park. He obtained the keys from R. Nolte and found the keys fit the vehicle.

At 1400 I turned the investigation over to Sgt. Doll and secured from the scene.

6- SEE ALSO followup Reports by:  
 Ofc. D. WRIGHT  
 Ofc. L. LEAKE  
 Dets. JENSEN  
       FERGUSON  
       GREEN

REPORTING OFFICER: <b>D. RICHARDS</b>	REVIEWING OFFICER 
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