

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

NATURAL GAS LEAKS RESULTING IN FATAL \*

HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY 24, 2024 \*

& SECOND HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY \*

27, 2024 IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI \*

Accident No.: PLD24FR003

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: RONICO EDWARDS, Captain, Rescue 14  
Jackson Fire Department

Jackson, Mississippi

Monday,  
January 29, 2024

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:00 p.m.)

1 MS. BOZHKO: Just so you know, I turned on the recording.

2  
3  
4 MR. SPILLERS: The recorder's on. One eighty-five -- what's  
5 the address?

6 MR. ARMON: Bristol.

7 MR. SPILLERS: Bristol. Bristol Drive (sic).

## INTERVIEW OF RONICO EDWARDS

8  
9 BY MR. SPILLERS:

10 Q. Your crew responded to that, that event, explosion and fire,  
11 do you know when you got there? Do you have a report or, I guess,  
12 just can you explain how your process works to document the  
13 response that you had for that?

14 A. I don't have the report with me, somebody else made that  
15 report to that fire. I put some input on it. I'm on Rescue 14,  
16 so basically my responsibility is, you know, getting to the fire  
17 and making a rescue or a search if somebody is in there. But that  
18 particular day I was the first one on the scene, so I wasn't able  
19 to do a risk, a search and rescue at that moment, I was just  
20 trying to extinguish as much of the fire as possible until the  
21 next unit got on the scene.

22 Q. So you're an individual truck or do you have a crew that goes  
23 with you?

24 A. It's me and two -- I have a driver and I have firefighter on  
25 the back.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So it's three total on my truck.

3 Q. Do you know approximately what time you arrived at the scene?

4 A. I would say, if I had to guess, between 8:00 and 8:15. If I  
5 had to guess.

6 Q. Yeah. Is that stuff in your report?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Information? So we'll like to get a copy of the report for  
9 our -- to help document, you know, the response.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. So you three were -- who else was -- who else was on your  
12 crew?

13 A. I have a lieutenant by the name of Besmond, B-e-s-m-o-n-d.  
14 And my firefighter was Jeremy Jackson.

15 Q. And Lieutenant Besmond, what's his last name?

16 A. I think Jones.

17 Q. Okay. And that information will be in the report, I assume.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. The response. Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. We can verify that information, then. When you arrived on  
22 the scene, can you describe what the situation was?

23 A. When I arrived on the scene, as we drove up to it, I could  
24 tell, before we got there, it was a large fire. By the time we  
25 drove up on the fire, it was a house, probably 2700 square feet,

1 fully involved. There wasn't a place on the house that wasn't  
2 burning, everything was burning. So do you want to know what my  
3 crew did?

4 Q. Yeah. Well, describe the scene a little bit more.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Did you notice, as you were approaching, were there any  
7 particular hot spots or --

8 A. As I approached, of course, the fire, like I said, everything  
9 and I do mean everything, every part of the house was on fire. As  
10 we pulled up, we noticed a bunch of items in the front yard, we  
11 had windows, glass, clothes, hats, just everything scattered  
12 across the front yard and that was strange because I've never seen  
13 that, just everything in the front yard.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. And you could see basically straight through the house.  
16 There was no windows, no doors, all you saw was fire everywhere, I  
17 mean, the whole house was engulfed in flames. Nothing, no part of  
18 the house where you can actually go in and try to put the fire  
19 out, just from outside. That's what we call an exterior attack,  
20 defensive mode, where you can't go in, you just extinguish it from  
21 the outside because you're risking, if you go on the inside, the  
22 roof collapsing on you.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. So like I said, when we pulled up, everything was in the  
25 front yard, everything was on fire. Even had some of the trees on

1 fire.

2 Q. Yeah, it was a pretty serious fire.

3 A. Yeah, everything --

4 Q. That thing burnt to a crisp.

5 A. Everything was on fire. There was a car in the garage.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. It was on fire. So like I said, everything, every part of  
8 the house was on fire. Nothing, nothing wasn't on fire. So that  
9 was a -- that's what I noticed when we drove up, just fire  
10 everywhere, everything across the front yard.

11 Q. And no noticeable hot spot or anything, to you?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Okay, so now what was your -- how did you guys attack  
14 that?

15 A. When we got out -- like I said, we were the first unit there,  
16 so we got out and me and my firefighter, we got the inch and  
17 three-quarter hose and we're potentially using water, supplies of  
18 water and we just started spraying and spraying and spraying, just  
19 trying to get something out, just spraying. We noticed it wasn't  
20 going out and I didn't know why it wasn't going out because I  
21 didn't know what was going on. I just thought it was a house  
22 fire. But we just extinguished, spraying water on it, as much as  
23 we can until, you know, the next unit come in and give me some  
24 help. So basically, up until somebody else came, all we could do  
25 was just try to put water on it.

1 Q. Okay, so another unit arrived on the scene?

2 A. Yeah. The next unit arrived and the district chief arrived.  
3 Like I said, we was constantly putting water on the fire.

4 Q. Do you know about how -- what time or how long you'd been  
5 there when the second unit --

6 A. The second unit was right behind me, I would say within --  
7 within a minute behind me. And I think they pulled a line off of  
8 their truck or whatever and just started hitting it from another  
9 side, opposite side, like I said, just trying to knock some fire  
10 down. But like I said, it wasn't.

11 Q. Had the roof collapsed at this point?

12 A. No. It hadn't collapsed upon my arrival. I'll put it like  
13 this, not that I -- not that I could see.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Because like I said, I couldn't go in the house because the  
16 whole house was engulfed in flames. So I'm not going to say it  
17 hadn't collapsed, just not that I could see.

18 Q. Okay. What about, did you see anybody else around, the  
19 homeowner or --

20 A. I saw the husband and another guy and how I knew it was the  
21 husband because when we drove up, I guess the other guy that was  
22 with him, with the owner of the house, the husband, he said that  
23 his wife was in there, his wife was in there, somebody's in there.  
24 So I guess that's how I knew that it was the homeowner.

25 Q. I think that was the house to the south, on the same side of



1 the road.

2 A. The same side.

3 Q. Yeah. This was 8 o'clock in the morning. Were they fully  
4 dressed like they had already been up or like --

5 A. I really didn't get a good look at him, but he had on  
6 clothes, they had on clothes. Because like I said, as we  
7 approached the house, we passed -- passed them, so in the fire  
8 truck --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- we passed two males --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. -- and they had some clothes on.

13 Q. Okay, so the second crew arrived, put the -- started putting  
14 water on the scene, do you know how long you guys worked the fire  
15 to -- I mean, it was more or less to keep it from spreading,  
16 probably, at that point, is that accurate?

17 A. Yes, sir. I'll tell you, I've been on this department about  
18 22 years and that's the longest it ever took us to put a fire out.  
19 It was like it just wouldn't, it wouldn't go out. So we fought  
20 it, we fought it for hours before we even got it under control.  
21 Hours, like more than one, you know. It was a -- it wasn't until  
22 I -- you know, I needed rest and that's when I put the hose down  
23 because the other crew was helping out to extinguish it and I  
24 heard that it was gas and that's why it wasn't going out. It was  
25 a gas leak or whatever, that's why it wasn't going out as fast as

1 it should have, because normally when you extinguish a fire,  
2 putting water on it, it'll start going out.

3 Q. It stays down.

4 A. Going out. This one, it was like the more water we put on  
5 it, the more fire was coming out.

6 Q. So do you know about how long or what time it was when you  
7 finally got it under control, more or less extinguished, I guess?

8 A. I don't know the time because I didn't have a watch on or  
9 nothing. But if I had to estimate the time we started putting it  
10 out to the time that we got it under control, I would say, my  
11 opinion -- as a matter of fact, I would say it took about two  
12 hours to even get it under control. And that's just basically  
13 getting it knocked down enough to be able to walk on the inside of  
14 the thing, to enter at all, because like I said, the whole thing  
15 was on fire.

16 Q. Yeah. The insider there, it's like charcoal on the floor.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And all the walls were standing, so it's really unusual --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- from that regard. Okay, but all of that information would  
21 be in the report that was made for your response to that and it  
22 would say time arrived, who all was -- responded and the time the  
23 fire came under control and the time that you left.

24 A. All that's normally in there.

25 Q. Your report. Like the victim and the homeowners, are those

1 names captured in the report, as well?

2 A. Yeah, they should be.

3 MR. ARMON: A lot of times he wouldn't know because he only  
4 has to do one part of the report. The main part of the report is  
5 done by the district chief.

6 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

7 MR. ARMON: So what's all in it, he wouldn't know. He would  
8 know what he put in.

9 MR. EDWARDS: Only what I put in it.

10 MR. ARMON: Yeah. Yeah, but he has access to go look at it,  
11 if he wanted to, but --

12 MR. SPILLERS: Right, understood.

13 BY MR. SPILLERS:

14 Q. And who's the district chief?

15 A. Shunta Wilder.

16 Q. Wilder?

17 A. Yes, sir. I think she comes in tomorrow, I think. Wilder.

18 MR. SPILLERS: So we'll probably -- if you want to share this  
19 information on the party stuff with the district chief, that might  
20 be the most appropriate person to make that call and we can  
21 contact them and see if they want to become a party to the  
22 investigation. But you guys can have that information and keep it  
23 and share it with anybody above you, the appropriate person, I  
24 don't know who that would be in your organization.

25 Do you guys have any questions?

1 BY MR. MATHEW:

2 Q. Just a real quick question. When you went there, the  
3 gentleman that you said -- it looked like the owner.

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. Was he -- I mean, was he at the sun side of the house or --

6 A. He was in the front of --

7 Q. He was in the front, okay.

8 A. Well, the front corner of the house. You know, he wasn't  
9 directly in the front, he was out to the street and as I was  
10 approaching, I saw somebody pushing him to the side, like just --  
11 like pushing him to the side, but he was in the street, he wasn't  
12 near the house.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. You know, you couldn't get near the house from the heat, but  
15 he was pushing him further up the street, you know, just basically  
16 getting him out of the way because they knew the crew had to come  
17 in and do their job.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. So like I said, I heard -- I think the guy that was beside  
20 him said there's somebody in there, there's somebody in there,  
21 it's his wife, you know, as he was pushing the guy up the street.  
22 Yeah, because it was raining.

23 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

24 MR. MATHEW: Right.

25 MR. EDWARDS: It was raining the whole time.

1 MR. SPILLERS: Thunder and lightning.

2 MS. BOZHKO: It was raining.

3 MR. EDWARDS: It was thundering, it was lightning, it was  
4 raining hard the whole time.

5 BY MS. BOZHKO:

6 Q. Do you remember how the call came in? What was said on the  
7 call that --

8 A. I wouldn't know.

9 Q. Oh, you wouldn't know?

10 A. No, I just get a call from dispatch saying --

11 Q. What do they tell you?

12 A. -- house fire.

13 Q. House fire.

14 A. Just house fire.

15 Q. Okay. And the address?

16 A. And the address. And they told me there's possibly someone  
17 -- that's all I got from dispatch.

18 MR. ARMON: There's a recording of that call.

19 MS. BOZHKO: Yeah. We might ask for it.

20 MR. MATHEW: Yeah.

21 MR. COTTON: Yeah. And Ronico, just a quick question on  
22 Atmos, did they come out after you were there or did they show up  
23 a few minutes afterwards, like how did that --

24 MR. EDWARDS: I can't say exactly what time they showed up.  
25 Like I said, I wasn't keeping the time, I was just in action.

1 MR. COTTON: Okay.

2 MR. EDWARDS: But the DC, district chief, she did call for  
3 Atmos when they realized it was gas was the reason this fire  
4 wasn't going out like it should and -- and plus, you could smell  
5 it.

6 BY MR. SPILLERS:

7 Q. You could smell gas at that point?

8 A. Yeah, you could smell it.

9 Q. How long do you think you'd been there until you realized you  
10 smelled gas?

11 A. I didn't smell it no sooner than I got there because like I  
12 said, my adrenaline was pumping, I was in action. But once I got  
13 a chance to rest, go sit down and me and my crew rest a little  
14 while and I realized what was going on, they told me, I could  
15 smell it then. And at that point I really could see it, you can  
16 -- you know, you can see where it was, where's it coming from and  
17 I'm like okay, that's why I can't -- we can't put this fire out.  
18 You can see and smell it.

19 BY MS. BOZHKO:

20 Q. Where was it?

21 A. It was in two parts, it was in the middle of the house by --  
22 it was like by the chimney some and it was on the left side of the  
23 house.

24 Q. If you face it?

25 A. If you face it, it was on this side. Yeah. Like I said, you

1 could actually see the blue flames and that's why it was hard to  
2 get it out. But as far as what time it took them, how long it  
3 took them to get there, I wouldn't know. I don't know.

4 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, we got dispatch information for the  
5 incident.

6 MR. EDWARDS: Okay.

7 MR. SPILLERS: So I just wanted to know if you were there and  
8 observed what they did when they got there.

9 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, I was there, I was there.

10 BY MS. BOZHKO:

11 Q. So district chief, you know, by observation, makes a decision  
12 that is a gas fed fire and then reaches out to Atmos?

13 A. Actually, I don't know how she made the decision, I don't  
14 know if somebody said something or what she saw and stuff, I don't  
15 know, you know, how she came to the conclusion. But normally,  
16 normally, anyway, when we get to a scene, we call Atmos anyway.

17 MR. SPILLERS: To isolate.

18 MR. EDWARDS: Atmos. We call Entergy. Anybody that we call  
19 to clip power or turn gas off, we call them anyway, so that  
20 probably was just routine by her calling them. So I don't know if  
21 she knew exactly what was going on at the time or if she just  
22 called them because that's procedure.

23 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, we can talk to her.

24 BY MR. COTTON:

25 Q. Has anybody else put input into the report other than you and

1 Ms. Wilder?

2 A. Yes, sir. Every unit that was on the scene.

3 Q. And Ms. Wilder is the one who put it together?

4 A. She's the one -- well, not that just puts it together. While  
5 she's on the scene she gathers all the information, you know,  
6 what's happening on the scene or who she called, what did they do,  
7 who did the rescue, search and rescue, she put all that in the --  
8 I mean, in the report.

9       Everybody else that attended and did anything, they're just  
10 going to put -- just add their input on what they did when they  
11 got there, what did they see. And basically, each unit has its  
12 own statement, but she has the big -- the main statement. If you  
13 need any information, that's the one to go to. The other little  
14 bits and pieces just help out, you know.

15 Q. What about anything valves, you know, gas valves, when you  
16 all arrived, did you all help shut those off?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Ahead of the gas company?

19 A. Yeah, we cut the power. Normally, we cut the power, you  
20 know, ladder truck, we'll cut the power on the side of the house  
21 or whatever, meter box. As far as the gas --

22       MR. ARMON: They do that, too.

23       MR. EDWARDS: Okay, they do that, too, cut the gas and bleed  
24 it out --

25       MR. SPILLERS: Shut the valve.



1 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, shut the valves off.

2 MR. ARMON: They just take a spanner wrench and it's a little  
3 -- I don't know what you call that, it guess it's a key, you put  
4 it down on it and turn it and you know if it's going with the --

5 MR. SPILLERS: The direction.

6 MR. ARMON: -- going through and if it's perpendicular, then  
7 it's off.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

9 MR. ARMON: So they can go in and they cut the gas.

10 BY MR. COTTON:

11 Q. In particular, I guess, that particular fire at Bristol, you  
12 all -- did you operate valves there at that location?

13 A. I'm not sure.

14 MR. ARMON: You'll have to ask -- it's mainly going to be the  
15 lieutenant on the ladder truck.

16 MR. EDWARDS: The ladder truck.

17 MR. ARMON: And so you would have to ask and it could be a  
18 situation just how he described it prior, with fire everywhere, it  
19 could've been a situation where they couldn't safely get up to it,  
20 so they have to -- may have had to keep it like that until they  
21 could get to it. So I don't -- yeah, I don't know, you'll have to  
22 ask --

23 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

24 MR. ARMON: -- the lieutenant on the ladder truck about what  
25 happened and they will know about what happened.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Me being there, just like you said, you  
2 couldn't have got to it. No way you can get close to the house to  
3 get to it.

4 MR. SPILLERS: The gas meter was on that left side of the  
5 house, facing the neighbor to the south side there. Did you see  
6 more flame into the house outside of the wall, because that's  
7 where the gas meter was, or there's a bunch of -- all around the  
8 house on the outside, there's debris from the burn and, you know,  
9 we don't know how much --

10 MR. EDWARDS: There was a bunch of debris on the outside,  
11 around the outside --

12 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

13 MR. EDWARDS: -- of the house, also. But you can see -- you  
14 can see the blue flames still coming more on that side of the  
15 house.

16 BY MS. BOZHKO:

17 Q. When you were saying that the full house was involved, like  
18 when you -- is that normal for a fire like that?

19 A. It depends on how long it's been burning.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. You know, they could call us early and call us late. Most of  
22 the time when it's arson, the whole house, because they can put a  
23 (indiscernible) around or something. This house, like I said, it  
24 -- everything on it was burning, everything. Trees, everything.

25 Q. And it's raining?

1 A. It was raining, it was raining, but it seemed like the rain  
2 was making it worse. The rain was making it worse, I'll tell you.  
3 It wasn't going out.

4 BY MR. SPILLERS:

5 Q. Crazy. Now, the Atmos employee, when he got there, did you  
6 see what he did, what actions he took?

7 A. I mean, he talked to the district chief and he started  
8 calling, you know, other people out. Like I said, he couldn't do  
9 anything at the moment until we got some kind of relief on that  
10 fire. But he called more units out and I think by the end of us  
11 putting the fire out, it was about 20 units out there.

12 Q. Yeah, they show up fast, don't they?

13 A. With backhoes and everything. And I think at the end they  
14 had to end up cutting the hole -- cutting the gas off at the top  
15 of the street, to everybody's house.

16 Q. Yeah, yeah. What time did you finally quit the scene and  
17 leave?

18 A. The district chief, she left -- she left before me, she left  
19 me -- she left me in command and she left probably about -- I'd  
20 say about 2 o'clock, and I released all the units probably about  
21 between 3:00 and 3:15. So we were out there from like 8:00 to  
22 about 3:15, 8:00 a.m. to about 3:15 p.m.

23 BY MS. BOZHKO:

24 Q. And you said there were about 20 units?

25 A. If not more.

1 MR. SPILLERS: That was Atmos units, though.

2 MR. EDWARDS: Atmos.

3 MR. SPILLERS: Not fire.

4 MR. EDWARDS: I'm saying there was about 20 Atmos units out  
5 there.

6 BY MS. BOZHKO:

7 Q. What about the fire department?

8 A. Oh. It was a lot, I'd say about -- normally, at a house  
9 fire, we have about five, four or five units. It was about -- I'm  
10 probably going to say about 10 units out there, because everybody  
11 was getting tired and they needed to call some extra units in to  
12 relieve some people because like I said, it took a while to get it  
13 out, so people were getting tired and they just called some extra  
14 units out there.

15 Q. And when you say 10 units, is it like the fire truck --

16 A. The fire. Yeah, you're talking about rescue units, you're  
17 talking about pumpers, ladder truck.

18 Q. Is that each -- that's each unit --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- rescue units --

21 A. Yeah, rescue. Yeah, engine. You got a ladder truck.

22 MR. SPILLERS: So you had 20 to 40 guys out there, if you  
23 counted them all up?

24 MR. ARMON: Not on an initial response, no.

25 MR. SPILLERS: No, total, at the end.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Total response. That particular day --

2 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

3 MR. EDWARDS: -- total, you had about -- yeah, I'd say  
4 probably about 15 people out there.

5 MR. SPILLERS: Fifteen, twenty. Okay.

6 MR. EDWARDS: Uh-huh.

7 MR. SPILLERS: And that would all be in the report that we  
8 can get from the district chief, all the responding units.

9 MR. EDWARDS: I'm sure that all the responding units will be  
10 in their report.

11 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

12 MR. ARMON: And we'll be able to share a list of names of all  
13 the people that were there.

14 MR. SPILLERS: Everybody that was on duty assigned to that.

15 MS. BOZHKO: Would it say like rescue unit?

16 MR. EDWARDS: Yes, ma'am.

17 MR. ARMON: It would be broken down into who was on what  
18 piece of equipment.

19 BY MR. MATHEW:

20 Q. A quick question. On the blue flame that you saw in the  
21 center of the house and also at the meter side, were they about  
22 the same height on the --

23 A. It was about -- I would say about a good four, four to five  
24 feet.

25 Q. Four to five feet?

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. Compared to the rest of the fire or were they higher --

3 A. I'm just saying you can know, I mean, you can distinguish it  
4 because it was blue, it was like a torch.

5 Q. Torch, okay.

6 A. So you know, I can distinguish the gas, you know, from a  
7 regular fire. And it was probably about, you know, about four to  
8 five feet blowing.

9 BY MR. SPILLERS:

10 Q. Above like the walls, at the roof or --

11 A. No, it was around the inside, it's like I guess that was a  
12 bigger room or something by the -- close to the chimney.

13 Q. Fireplace?

14 A. Fireplace, yeah. It's kind of probably about three, about  
15 three, four feet in there.

16 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

17 (Crosstalk.)

18 BY MR. COTTON:

19 Q. Mr. Felton (ph.), one of you all employees, I think he  
20 documented the scene, I talked to him and he said he documented  
21 the scene. Was he out there doing any documentation, especially  
22 early on in the fire process? Mr. Felton. Now, does he always  
23 come out to the place and conduct these?

24 A. Normally, he'll come after the fact. This time he came  
25 during.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And he came during the process.

3 Q. Okay. Is there video, any pictures that he can share with us  
4 on that?

5 A. Of what?

6 Q. The fire.

7 MR. SPILLERS: And the response.

8 MR. COTTON: What he was documenting.

9 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

10 MR. ARMON: You want to see pictures of the fire?

11 MR. COTTON: Whatever Mr. Felton documented when he come out.

12 MR. ARMON: He may not have pictures of the fire. Or he may  
13 not have. Felton, he's a fire investigator --

14 MR. COTTON: Right.

15 MR. ARMON: -- and like he was saying, most of the time, when  
16 they get to the fire, if there's something that's in question  
17 they'll call for a fire investigator and the fire investigator  
18 will respond. How quickly he'll get there depends on how quickly  
19 he gets the call and I don't know what the circumstances on this  
20 one was, but if he's saying that he got there while they were  
21 actually fighting the fire, I mean, that's not uncommon. But if  
22 they were taking pictures, he probably got pictures like after  
23 everything was all said and done, because they go in and, you  
24 know, sift through the rubble and try to make a determination as  
25 to how the fire started. But if you want actual footage of the

1 scene, we have cameras on our trucks, so --

2 MS. BOZHKO: Oh, you do?

3 MR. ARMON: Yeah, the videos, where do they come from?

4 MR. EDWARDS: On the (indiscernible).

5 MR. ARMON: On the truck?

6 MR. EDWARDS: (Indiscernible).

7 MR. ARMON: Okay. Actually, there should be some video of it  
8 and --

9 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

10 MR. COTTON: That would be real helpful.

11 MR. ARMON: -- our fire investigators can pull footage from  
12 the -- from those trucks. So I don't know if all of them --  
13 because we have reserve units that are in service, but the  
14 majority of our -- especially our front line will all have cameras  
15 on them, so they can pull that footage.

16 MR. SPILLERS: And how long does -- do you just keep that  
17 footage on those cameras and overwrite it or is it a card or just  
18 a --

19 MR. ARMON: It rolls off unless you --

20 MR. SPILLERS: Download it over time.

21 MR. ARMON: Yeah.

22 MR. SPILLERS: So okay, we'll want to make sure we get on  
23 that and it's Felton, what's his --

24 MR. COTTON: Would Felton be the one that would have access  
25 to that or someone else?



1 MR. ARMON: Well, Felton is the investigator that responded  
2 to that location. The investigator, the chief investigator that's  
3 over the entire area is Chief Neely.

4 MR. COTTON: McGee?

5 MR. ARMON: Neely.

6 MR. COTTON: Neely.

7 MR. ARMON: Yeah.

8 MR. COTTON: And you think that's who we need to talk to?

9 MR. ARMON: Either Felton or Neely, yes, sir.

10 MR. COTTON: Okay.

11 MS. BOZHKO: When Mr. Felton does his investigations, he  
12 creates a report of them? Is that the purpose?

13 MR. ARMON: Yes.

14 MS. BOZHKO: Okay.

15 MR. ARMON: He'll create a report and he'll attach it to the  
16 SMO (ph.).

17 MS. BOZHKO: So it would be part of the overall report?

18 MR. EDWARDS: Um-hum.

19 MR. COTTON: Such a report, just ballpark, a week, two weeks,  
20 a month, how long does it normally take to get a finished report?

21 MR. ARMON: As far as -- the report should be available now.

22 MR. COTTON: Okay.

23 MR. ARMON: But as far as Investigator Felton attaching his  
24 part of it, it could take a couple days. But I would still think  
25 that it would be -- it could potentially not be available now,

1 depending on what he's looking into, but I would think it is.

2 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. Do any of the individuals, they don't  
3 have body cams or anything like that, any of the firefighters and  
4 that kind of stuff? Did the district chief or the chief take  
5 pictures to document anything or --

6 MR. ARMON: Not unless it's just something she wanted to do  
7 on her own.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay, so there's no requirement.

9 MR. ARMON: But it's not nothing --

10 MR. SPILLERS: We can ask her --

11 MR. ARMON: It's nothing that's required.

12 MR. SPILLERS: -- if she's got any images or notes or  
13 anything like that to share with us.

14 BY MR. SPILLERS:

15 Q. The homeowner, were you there when -- did they come in an  
16 ambulance and take him to the hospital for examination, do you  
17 know that?

18 A. No. Yes, they did take him by ambulance because I talked to  
19 the AMR guy and he said that he did go by ambulance just to get --  
20 just checking him out.

21 Q. The house directly across the street from 185, the  
22 homeowner's son lives there, was he -- did you see him on the  
23 scene or not? He might not have been at home, I don't know, but I  
24 just wondered.

25 A. Yes, I did.

1 Q. You did see him.

2 A. Uh-huh. But I can't -- I didn't see him until basically when  
3 we got the house under control, it was -- because it was a while  
4 before they came out. I don't know if they -- I don't know, it  
5 was a while until they came.

6 MS. BOZHKO: Do you know if he came out of his house or he  
7 drove up?

8 MR. EDWARDS: I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

9 BY MR. SPILLERS:

10 Q. Homeowner. You say the homeowner went to the hospital in the  
11 ambulance, you talked to AMR, what's AMR?

12 A. Say that again?

13 Q. You said the homeowner went to the hospital on the ambulance.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. AMR told you that?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. It was --

18 A. Well, basically, you have the AMR supervisor came on the  
19 scene along with the AMR truck. The AMR supervisor, he has all  
20 the pickup trucks just to come and chill out or see what he got to  
21 do, but he stayed on the scene just to make sure nobody get hurt.  
22 So AMR, the truck, actually took him to the hospital while the  
23 supervisor just remained on the scene just in case he was needed  
24 and he just told me that the guy was transported by a unit.

25 Q. What's AMR stand for, do you know?

1 MR. ARMON: American Medical Response.

2 MR. COTTON: And that news footage of him, they put him in  
3 the ambulance and he's on a stretcher.

4 MR. SPILLERS: Oh.

5 MR. EDWARDS: Right.

6 MR. COTTON: And you can see him looking around, he's very  
7 alert, but there is news footage of him in the ambulance --

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

9 MR. COTTON: -- on a stretcher. Yeah.

10 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. And AMR would have a report of their  
11 involvement as well, separate from the fire report?

12 MR. EDWARDS: Separate.

13 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

14 MS. BOZHKO: Is that a city agency or is it like a private  
15 enterprise?

16 MR. EDWARDS: I think it's private, ain't it?

17 MR. ARMON: Yeah, it's not a city, it's not a city entity.

18 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, it's private.

19 MR. ARMON: Actually, they have a contract with a county.

20 MS. BOZHKO: All right.

21 BY MR. MATHEW:

22 Q. Did at any time did you guys see the homeowner come back  
23 after the ambulance?

24 A. Someone told me they saw him --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- kind of saw him come back. I never seen him, but I heard,  
2 they said -- when he came back, some of the family members of his  
3 went across to the house across the street, which is his son-in-  
4 law's house or his son's house or something, but I didn't see him  
5 personally but I was told he came back. But like I said, we were  
6 out there from about 8:00 to 3:00, so within that time he came  
7 back.

8 BY MR. SPILLERS:

9 Q. Were you also there when they removed the remains of his  
10 wife?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. And who does that, the --

13 A. Well --

14 Q. -- coroner does that or how does that work?

15 A. -- my crew found her because we had to dig her out. The  
16 roof, some of the roofing, bricks or whatever had fell on top of  
17 her. So we ended up, it took probably about three hours to find  
18 her after the fire was out, because we kind of cleared the area  
19 where she was at. The coroner came and did the examinations and  
20 they took her away.

21 MS. BOZHKO: Which part of the house did you find her?

22 MR. EDWARDS: In the middle bedroom, it's like the bedroom  
23 right there in the middle, she was --

24 MS. BOZHKO: Where the flames were coming up?

25 MR. EDWARDS: No, she wasn't where the flames was coming up,

1 she was in bed kind of -- the flames was toward the front and she  
2 was toward the back of the house in a bed in the bedroom. I don't  
3 know if that was the main bedroom or what, but that's where she  
4 was found.

5 BY MR. SPILLERS:

6 Q. Towards the back of the house?

7 A. Towards the back of the house in a bedroom. That said it was  
8 a five-bedroom house.

9 Q. It was a big house.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Yeah. Very nice neighborhood and nice house, yeah.

12 A. A big house, a very nice house.

13 Q. Again, the coroner would have all the reports, too.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 MR. ARMON: We did help remove her and load her up.

16 BY MR. SPILLERS:

17 Q. Do you know who the coroner is?

18 A. The name --

19 MR. ARMON: Sharon Grisham-Stewart.

20 MR. EDWARDS: No, she wasn't the one. It was a guy. What's  
21 his name?

22 MR. ARMON: You were asking who is the coroner?

23 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, who's the coroner.

24 MR. EDWARDS: Not the one that picked her up.

25 MR. SPILLERS: Well, who's the general coroner?

1 MR. EDWARDS: Sharon Grisham.

2 MR. ARMON: Sharon Grisham-Stewart.

3 MR. SPILLERS: Sharon?

4 MR. ARMON: Yeah. A lot of times she has a deputy coroner  
5 that will come out and pick bodies up, but I don't know who was  
6 the actual -- was it Jeremiah?

7 MR. EDWARDS: Jeremiah. Yeah, Jeremiah. I don't know his  
8 last name, but he was the one that actually came out there and did  
9 a report and took her away.

10 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. You guys think of anything else?

11 You had a long day.

12 MR. EDWARDS: Huh?

13 MR. SPILLERS: That was a long day.

14 MR. EDWARDS: Oh, man, like I said, I had never had one that  
15 long before.

16 MR. SPILLERS: No kidding?

17 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

18 MS. BOZHKO: Who else responded to the scene? There's the  
19 fire department, then Atmos, then AMR, then at some point the  
20 coroner came. Any other agencies that were involved?

21 MR. SPILLERS: The police, you seen police.

22 MR. EDWARDS: Well, yeah, you had -- yes, the police, but  
23 they were basically for crowd control, blocking off the street to  
24 where nobody could get to come down there in that area. So  
25 basically you had PD, you had the AMR unit and you had Atmos, the

1 fire department personnel. That's all I can think of right off.

2 MR. ARMON: Entergy come?

3 MR. EDWARDS: Entergy, I don't recall if they came or not.

4 MR. SPILLERS: Entergy, yeah.

5 MR. EDWARDS: I can't recall. They could have, but there was  
6 some many cars, vehicles out there, I can't recall.

7 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah. Unless they walk by with a hard hat or  
8 a vest on that said Entergy on it, you wouldn't --

9 MR. EDWARDS: There was a lot of them.

10 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

11 MR. EDWARDS: A lot of hard hats.

12 MS. BOZHKO: Do you guys use like hydrants there or there's  
13 no hydrants and you have to like bring the water --

14 MR. EDWARDS: No, no, no. We connected to a hydrant, there's  
15 a hydrant right across the street.

16 MS. BOZHKO: There is?

17 MR. EDWARDS: So we did connect to a hydrant.

18 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, right. The front corner of the --

19 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

20 MR. SPILLERS: -- son's house there --

21 MR. EDWARDS: Right.

22 MR. SPILLERS: -- directly across from the driveway --

23 MR. EDWARDS: Of the cul-de-sac.

24 MR. SPILLERS: -- of the neighbor, yeah.

25 MR. EDWARDS: It was round, so --



1 MR. SPILLERS: Right before you get to the start of it, on  
2 the right side there's a --

3 MR. EDWARDS: Um-hum.

4 MR. MATHEW: You had mentioned for 22 years you haven't seen  
5 anything like this, right?

6 MR. EDWARDS: Right.

7 MR. MATHEW: This is something very unique because the flames  
8 were going at a certain height and blew and --

9 MR. EDWARDS: This was my first explosion. I mean, normally,  
10 when you're going to a house, you know the house is on fire, you  
11 know, you got everything, you still attack or whatever. But like  
12 I said, when we made it here you could see straight through it.  
13 When I say straight through it, straight through it because there  
14 were no windows, were no doors, all that was out in the yard. So  
15 you see flames everywhere, but you can see straight through the  
16 house.

17 MS. BOZHKO: Was the roof still up?

18 MR. EDWARDS: Like I said, I couldn't -- I can't -- I  
19 couldn't -- it hadn't collapsed.

20 MS. BOZHKO: But it wasn't like blowing any way or that you  
21 can remember?

22 MR. EDWARDS: I can't tell you, I mean, it was just --

23 MR. COTTON: Hopefully there will be footage on the -- on  
24 your truck to make efforts with that.

25 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah. Yeah, those trucks out there

1 (indiscernible).

2 MS. BOZHKO: Were any of them facing (indiscernible) like the  
3 video --

4 MR. ARMON: They got cameras all over the fire truck.

5 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

6 (Crosstalk.)

7 MR. EDWARDS: I do have a video on my phone of us --

8 MR. SPILLERS: Oh, you do?

9 MR. EDWARDS: -- driving up to it.

10 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

11 MR. EDWARDS: And it shows basically the house, the whole  
12 house.

13 MR. SPILLERS: Can you share that with us?

14 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah. Whenever you want it.

15 MR. SPILLERS: Okay, yeah, I appreciate that.

16 MR. EDWARDS: I think that will help on the questions of what  
17 it looked like, you know.

18 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah. I can give you my phone number if you  
19 want to text it to me right now.

20 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, I can do that.

21 MR. SPILLERS: That would be great.

22 MR. EDWARDS: Give me your phone number. Yeah, give me your  
23 phone number.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, it's [REDACTED]

25 (Off microphone discussion.)

1 (Pause.)

2 MR. SPILLERS: Got it. Whoa, maybe I didn't.

3 MR. EDWARDS: No --

4 MR. SPILLERS: I got a missed phone call.

5 MR. EDWARDS: No, I had called --

6 MR. SPILLERS: So no --

7 MR. EDWARDS: -- just trying to lock it in there.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Oh, okay, you called. Okay, cool.

9 MR. EDWARDS: Okay, give your number again, (771) --

10 MR. SPILLERS: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I had to think about it.

12 MR. COTTON: You don't call yourself.

13 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, so --

14 (Off microphone discussion.)

15 MR. EDWARDS: Okay, (indiscernible).

16 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

17 MR. COTTON: Let's go in there and (indiscernible). Oh, you  
18 already --

19 (Video played.)

20 MR. SPILLERS: I keep touching it and messing it up.

21 MS. BOZHKO: So in 20 years that you've been working, you  
22 haven't had explosions here.

23 MR. EDWARDS: I haven't been to it, personally. I'm sure  
24 there's been some, I just haven't (indiscernible).

25 MS. BOZHKO: Oh, okay.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Like I said, to drive up and everything in the  
2 yard, scattered, like where is all this -- where did all of this  
3 come from? Hats, the lady that lived there, her hats, church  
4 hats, clothes, everything laying in the front yard, how did this  
5 get out here, you know, and the windows, glass, and doors in the  
6 front yard, no, I had never seen nothing like that. I had never  
7 seen --

8 MR. SPILLERS: Wow. Wow.

9 MS. BOZHKO: So how is it generally, like, you guys are  
10 working the fire and Atmos arrives, do you or do they coordinate  
11 with you or do they tell you or how does it work?

12 MR. EDWARDS: They probably coordinate with the DC.

13 MS. BOZHKO: Okay.

14 MR. EDWARDS: Work with the district chief, not him, but the  
15 district chief, they probably coordinate with him.

16 MS. BOZHKO: Okay.

17 MR. EDWARDS: I mean, I'm working.

18 MS. BOZHKO: Yeah.

19 MR. EDWARDS: So she's probably talking to them and seeing  
20 what's going on or whatever the case may be. They communicate,  
21 I'm not communicating.

22 MR. ARMON: They just pull up and go to work.

23 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

24 MR. ARMON: Sometimes if they don't know what's going on,  
25 they'll, you know, ask you something or tell you something.

1 (Video stopped.)

2 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, I'll share with you guys.

3 MR. ARMON: But the majority of the time --

4 (Crosstalk.)

5 MR. MATHEW: That is good.

6 MR. SPILLERS: It's wow.

7 MR. MATHEW: Very good.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

9 MR. COTTON: That's a hot fire.

10 MR. SPILLERS: That is a hot fire, I agree.

11 MR. EDWARDS: Like I said, everything was on fire.

12 MR. SPILLERS: We got any more questions about that event?

13 MR. COTTON: Just anything that you can think of that we  
14 didn't ask --

15 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

16 MR. COTTON: -- that might've been unusual about that  
17 situation at that location and that fire. Anything that we might  
18 not have asked about.

19 MR. EDWARDS: I mean, by me sitting, you know, if you all  
20 asked me questions, you can just call, you know.

21 MR. SPILLERS: I will. Appreciate that very much.

22 MR. EDWARDS: Just call and I'll help you out and do what I  
23 can.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, appreciate that, thank you.

25 MR. COTTON: Thank you.

1 MR. SPILLERS: I don't know of anything else at this point to  
2 ask you about the Bristol fire. Anybody else have anything on  
3 that one they want to ask? We need to talk to the coroner and the  
4 district chief --

5 MS. BOZHKO: Yeah.

6 MR. SPILLERS: -- and the investigator and get the  
7 information in the reports that they have, and AMR, they would  
8 have some information, as well.

9 MS. BOZHKO: Would the fire department get an odor call?  
10 Like if people smell gas in the area, do they call you or do they  
11 call Atmos? Do you ever get them?

12 MR. ARMON: Yeah, we do get calls for -- for smelling gas.  
13 We used to have -- well, we have gas meters and we can go out, but  
14 we only go out and check because they still need to contact Atmos  
15 to have them come out and check it.

16 MR. SPILLERS: But the investigator would be able to tell us  
17 if there are any 9-1-1 calls for gas in that area over the last  
18 six months or something.

19 MR. ARMON: Dispatch should be able to.

20 MR. SPILLERS: Dispatch. So Investigator Felton, would he be  
21 able to help us with that?

22 MR. ARMON: No, not --

23 MR. SPILLERS: You have to go through dispatch.

24 MR. ARMON: Determining the history of what's going on in the  
25 area, the dispatch would because they're the ones that would

1 receive the call and they would have a record of what calls came  
2 out and who to call for that type of search.

3 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

4 MS. BOZHKO: The records of the call coming in, would it be  
5 with you guys?

6 MR. ARMON: Yes, ma'am.

7 MR. EDWARDS: Yes, ma'am.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Is that countywide dispatch or are you guys  
9 city?

10 MR. EDWARDS: City.

11 MR. SPILLERS: City dispatch, so it's fire, police as well,  
12 everything? Okay, cool.

13 MR. ARMON: Yeah. It will be fire, police, not AMR.

14 MR. SPILLERS: AMR's private.

15 MR. ARMON: AMR has their own dispatch.

16 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. I can't think of anything else to ask  
17 about the Bristol.

18 MR. MATHEW: Yeah, I can't think of anything on my side,  
19 either, but good information.

20 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

21 MR. MATHEW: Thank you.

22 MR. SPILLERS: Thank you, appreciate it.

23 MR. ARMON: Okay, no problem.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Now, did you respond to Shalimar, that fire as  
25 well? Okay, that's why I was moving along.

1 MR. ARMON: That one you're not sure?

2 MR. EDWARDS: This particular fire, I don't know because I  
3 wasn't (indiscernible).

4 MR. ARMON: Oh, okay.

5 MR. EDWARDS: That's why I couldn't recall the name of the  
6 lieutenant, because I'm like I wasn't supposed to be there,  
7 anyway. But yeah, I went to Shalimar, too.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. Well --

9 MS. BOZHKO: But you weren't first --

10 MR. EDWARDS: I was second.

11 MS. BOZHKO: Second, okay.

12 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, I was second.

13 MR. ARMON: Twelve was first there, right?

14 MR. EDWARDS: Twelve was first on that, because it's right --  
15 about two streets down from them and I was second on the scene.

16 MR. COTTON: They got (indiscernible).

17 MR. EDWARDS: It's his fault.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MR. EDWARDS: It's his fault, I blame him every day. You  
20 sent me over to that station.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This one's drive and the other one's  
22 boulevard.

23 MR. EDWARDS: Oh.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, I think Shalimar Drive, I think, yeah.  
25 Bristol Boulevard, yeah.



1 BY MR. SPILLERS:

2 Q. Okay, so can you describe your involvement with the Shalimar  
3 response? Your crew, you responded to support the initial crew  
4 or --

5 A. I was -- like he was telling you, saying, basically, at a  
6 fire they send out rescue, engine, ladder truck, you know,  
7 probably about three, three or four units and I was the rescue  
8 that they sent to that fire.

9 MR. ARMON: On an initial response for a house fire, you  
10 know, you got two engines, rescue, ladder truck, and district  
11 chief. So that's what we call an initial response. So when you  
12 said did he come for support, no, they're all responding, you  
13 know, to the fire, they get --

14 MR. SPILLERS: Primary response.

15 MR. EDWARDS: We have.

16 MR. SPILLERS: It wasn't that they asked for more help. You  
17 responded as part of the --

18 MR. EDWARDS: No, not this. No, I wasn't the initial  
19 response to it.

20 MR. SPILLERS: Okay, cool.

21 MS. BOZHKO: Is that five units, then, the district chief is  
22 a unit?

23 MR. ARMON: The district chief is incident commander, they're  
24 there. I always call them like fire coordinators, they're there  
25 to make sure that everything is done in the right sequence.

1 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

2 MR. COTTON: That's Ms. Myers (ph.), too? Ms. Myers?

3 MR. EDWARDS: This was somebody else.

4 MR. ARMON: No, Chief Wilder.

5 MR. COTTON: Wilder. Yeah, (indiscernible).

6 MR. ARMON: Yeah.

7 MR. EDWARDS: She wasn't the one for this fire.

8 MR. COTTON: She's not? Okay.

9 MS. BOZHKO: Oh.

10 MR. EDWARDS: No. The chief for this fire.

11 MR. COTTON: Who is that one?

12 MR. EDWARDS: Dorsey Hamlin. D-o-r-s-e-y.

13 MR. MATHEW: And what was that last name?

14 MR. EDWARDS: Hamlin.

15 MR. MATHEW: Hamlet?

16 MR. EDWARDS: H-a-m-l-i-n.

17 BY MR. SPILLERS:

18 Q. So you were Rescue 14 again responding to this?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And who was on your crew that day?

21 A. It was --

22 MR. ARMON: That's your regular crew, right?

23 MR. EDWARDS: I don't know what came there. It was me, my  
24 lieutenant was -- his last name was Victors -- I mean, Vickers.

25 MR. ARMON: Do you know the date of that fire?

1 MR. EDWARDS: Last shift.  
2 MR. ARMON: What's the date?  
3 MR. EDWARDS: What's the date? It was -- that was --  
4 MR. SPILLERS: That was 27.  
5 MR. EDWARDS: -- Sunday.  
6 MR. COTTON: I think it was Sunday, yeah.  
7 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.  
8 MS. BOZHKO: It was Saturday.  
9 MR. SPILLERS: I think it was Saturday.  
10 MR. EDWARDS: Saturday.  
11 MR. SPILLERS: I think it was Saturday.  
12 MR. ARMON: Saturday, you all know the date of Saturday?  
13 MR. COTTON: The 26th.  
14 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, it was, it was Saturday morning.  
15 MR. SPILLERS: Because I got here Saturday, yeah, it was  
16 Saturday morning --  
17 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, Saturday morning.  
18 MR. SPILLERS: -- because I got here Saturday --  
19 MR. EDWARDS: Right, Saturday morning.  
20 MR. SPILLERS: -- and it already happened.  
21 MR. ARMON: Saturday was the 27th?  
22 MR. COTTON: Twenty-seventh, yeah.  
23 MR. EDWARDS: That morning, probably about what, like four?  
24 Three, 4 o'clock.  
25 MR. ARMON: Rescue 14.

1 MR. SPILLERS: Four thirty a.m., somewhere around there,  
2 wasn't it? I think.

3 MR. COTTON: Around 4:30.

4 MR. EDWARDS: It was Saturday morning.

5 MR. ARMON: I thought it was Sunday morning.

6 MR. EDWARDS: No, it was Saturday.

7 MR. ARMON: So it was Friday morning. No, Friday night going  
8 into --

9 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, overnight Friday, Saturday. Yeah.

10 MR. ARMON: Right, because there on -- there on Rescue 14 you  
11 got Ronico Edwards, John Vickers, and then Kenneth Wilson.

12 MR. EDWARDS: Right. Yeah, that was my crew.

13 MS. BOZHKO: What was the last name?

14 MR. ARMON: Kenneth Wilson.

15 MR. EDWARDS: Kenneth Wilson.

16 MR. SPILLERS: He was a firefighter?

17 MR. EDWARDS: Yes, sir.

18 MR. SPILLERS: The lieutenant, what was the first name?

19 MR. EDWARDS: John Vickers.

20 MR. SPILLERS: John Vickers?

21 MR. EDWARDS: Uh-huh.

22 MR. ARMON: He was working overtime.

23 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah.

24 BY MR. SPILLERS:

25 Q. V-i-c-k-e-r-s, Vickers?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. My third grade teacher would be proud of me, I spelled  
3 something right. So you were the second crew arriving on the  
4 scene, or unit, I guess, second. Can you describe what you saw  
5 when you got there?

6 A. When we got to that one, like I said, Engine 12 got on the  
7 scene first, so they started extinguishing the fire. The whole  
8 house wasn't on fire in this situation. I'd say just -- I'd say  
9 just the left, the left side of the house was on fire. This  
10 particular time I just went in, the house wasn't completely  
11 involved, so I could go in and do -- me and my team did a search,  
12 basically just search to make sure, a search and rescue to make  
13 wasn't nobody up in there.

14 MS. BOZHKO: So the house that blew up, like in pieces and  
15 then the house next to it on the left is on fire.

16 MR. EDWARDS: Right, the house that was in pieces, there  
17 wasn't nothing coming from it. It was just pieces.

18 BY MR. SPILLERS:

19 Q. And there really wasn't any fire there, wasn't it?

20 A. There was no -- that was crazy, their house was all leveled  
21 on the ground, just covered in pieces --

22 Q. Looked like somebody stomped on it.

23 A. -- across the street and everything. But it wasn't on fire.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. But I guess the impact from the other house that blew up, I

1 guess the impact blew the house down, so to speak. I don't know.

2 MR. ARMON: I think the flame from the gas meter on the --  
3 the power from the explosion, I think the flames ignited the other  
4 house. I don't think it ignited that house when the flames went  
5 over --

6 (Crosstalk.)

7 MR. SPILLERS: Blew up and started the fire on the other  
8 house.

9 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, that house is gone.

10 MR. ARMON: That's what I think.

11 MR. EDWARDS: You and I both.

12 MR. ARMON: There's nothing out there.

13 MR. EDWARDS: Okay, yeah.

14 MR. ARMON: I went to that one. I hadn't been on the one at  
15 Bristol.

16 MR. EDWARDS: So I just did a search, realized wasn't nobody  
17 up in there but, like I said, that particular house was just on  
18 fire, on the left-hand side where the fire did get in there.

19 MS. BOZHKO: Was anybody inside?

20 MR. ARMON: No, nobody was inside.

21 BY MR. SPILLERS:

22 Q. What time would you say approximately, like kind of early  
23 morning?

24 A. It was between 3:00 and 4:00.

25 Q. Three and four.

1 A. Between 3:00 and 4:00. Possibly about like 4 o'clock a.m.

2 MS. BOZHKO: Was the house occupied, meaning that people were  
3 living in it or was it abandoned?

4 MR. EDWARDS: The one that was on fire?

5 MS. BOZHKO: Either or both.

6 MR. EDWARDS: The one that was disintegrated --

7 MS. BOZHKO: Yeah.

8 MR. EDWARDS: -- there wasn't nobody up in there, but the one  
9 that was actually on fire, the gas is coming from, nobody was  
10 there. I did talk to the owner of the house and he was on the  
11 outside, but he wasn't even there, he just heard about it and  
12 drove to the scene and I talked to him. So there wasn't nobody  
13 living in there.

14 MS. BOZHKO: Okay. Not abandoned, but nobody's living there.

15 MR. EDWARDS: No, no, nobody was there.

16 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, my understanding is it's a rental  
17 property. Somebody was going to be moving in.

18 MR. EDWARDS: Right, he was fixing it up --

19 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

20 MR. EDWARDS: -- for somebody to move in.

21 BY MR. SPILLERS:

22 Q. Yeah. Do you know how long you were on the scene there,  
23 fighting that fire?

24 A. How long the fire lasted or --

25 Q. Yeah, how long the fire lasted.

1 A. Well, we extinguished it, like I said, we -- this particular  
2 one, we got a chance to extinguish it, everything but that  
3 particular side where the gas was coming from, and that gas was  
4 like a -- it was like a blow torch, also, it was just pshoo (ph.),  
5 going in one direction, up against the house, up against the  
6 bricks or something and you couldn't put it out because, I mean,  
7 you could hear it, it was like a train, vroom (ph.), that's all  
8 you heard. So you couldn't put it out, so you just had -- we had  
9 to just wait until Atmos got there and from my understanding, the  
10 only way for them to turn that gas -- because when it exploded or  
11 whatever, the bricks from the house covered the gas meter.

12 There wasn't no going and just turning the gas off, they had  
13 to call a backhoe to come and get all, you know, the bricks and  
14 stuff from around it in order to turn it off. So it blew there  
15 for -- it blew for -- it blew like this. I got off of work, they  
16 relieved me from the scene probably about 7:30 that morning  
17 because they was waiting on Atmos to come and it was still  
18 blowing, they hadn't been able to turn it off yet. But the fire  
19 was contained to just that one spot. If that makes sense.

20 MR. COTTON: But they did turn it off up there by where the  
21 flame was at, is that where they turned it off at or somewhere  
22 else?

23 MR. EDWARDS: Like I said, I left, when I left --

24 MR. COTTON: You left.

25 MR. EDWARDS: When I left, it was still blowing.



1 MR. COTTON: It was still blowing.

2 MR. EDWARDS: They hadn't been able to turn it off yet. It  
3 was still blowing, still blowing a flame. It was like somebody  
4 had a blow torch up on the bricks and it was just hitting the  
5 house.

6 MR. COTTON: And you left about what time?

7 MR. EDWARDS: I left about -- my crew left about 7:30, but  
8 they was bringing another crew in to relieve me.

9 MR. ARMON: You were on the scene (indiscernible).

10 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, relieved, relieved me from the scene.

11 MR. COTTON: Right.

12 MR. MATHEW: So that fire was going at an angle to the blue  
13 flame. Okay.

14 MS. BOZHKO: So it was coming from the exploded house side to  
15 the --

16 MR. EDWARDS: Um-hum.

17 MS. BOZHKO: -- to the burning one or was it the burning  
18 side's meter?

19 MR. EDWARDS: The house that was on fire?

20 MS. BOZHKO: Um-hum.

21 MR. EDWARDS: It was connected to that house.

22 MR. SPILLERS: That meter was the one that's doing it?

23 MR. EDWARDS: That meter was the one that was blowing.

24 MS. BOZHKO: Okay.

25 MR. EDWARDS: Blowing gas.

1 MR. SPILLERS: You don't have any video of this one, do you?

2 MR. EDWARDS: I don't have it, no, sir.

3 MR. SPILLERS: Okay, got you.

4 (Crosstalk.)

5 MR. SPILLERS: But the crew, all the trucks would have --  
6 your truck would have cameras on it.

7 MR. EDWARDS: Right, the trucks will have it. Uh-huh.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

9 MR. EDWARDS: Probably have it another angle on some.

10 BY MR. SPILLERS:

11 Q. Okay, so you were on there about three hours fighting the  
12 fire. Anything else particular you can think about that was  
13 unusual about that fire or --

14 A. Nothing really unusual about that particular fire, that  
15 wasn't as bad as the other one. I did see some doors in the yard  
16 and I think, from my understanding, they said a house across the  
17 street, the windows had blew out of -- some of the windows blew  
18 out of that house when it exploded. I think they said one or two  
19 houses the windows had exploded across the street, they exploded.  
20 But like I said, it wasn't a big concern. It wasn't a big  
21 concern. Most every -- of all the stuff that you see just  
22 everywhere was that house next door and all --

23 Q. Yeah, there's pieces of roof hanging from the trees.

24 A. Even the trees, yeah.

25 Q. The garage door parts of it was across the road.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. I saw that. Okay. No victims?

3 A. No, there wasn't no victims.

4 Q. We'll get information on the units that responded to that.

5 Did you see any police there or --

6 A. Yeah, there was police on the scene.

7 Q. Police were on scene.

8 A. Yeah, we had police on the scene.

9 Q. It's sort of a narrow road, so --

10 A. Right. So it wasn't -- it was just police other than JFD  
11 Fire Department vehicles and Atmos, a few Atmos trucks, I want to  
12 say, and that's basically it.

13 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. All right. Any more questions on that  
14 one?

15 MR. MATHEW: Not from me.

16 MR. SPILLERS: About the scene?

17 MR. EDWARDS: Like I said --

18 MR. SPILLERS: I got your number now.

19 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, you have it.

20 (Laughter.)

21 MR. SPILLERS: Wow, pretty eventful couple days here.  
22 Rickey, anything else?

23 MR. COTTON: Not that I can think of right now.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Not right now.

25 Elena?

1 BY MS. BOZHKO:

2 Q. Do you remember how the call came in, what was reported or  
3 does it tell you, again, just fire?

4 A. Basically, the call came in from dispatch --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- as a house fire. As I was approaching, you know, still on  
7 the radio, still coming through the radio, our district chief, he  
8 made it on the scene before I did and he -- before we got there he  
9 did acknowledge, he said it was an explosion. Because basically,  
10 when I got there, he told me that it shook the fire station when  
11 it exploded. A lot of people around the area heard it and felt  
12 it. So basically, on my way there, he got on the radio, I guess,  
13 to prepare us and said it was a home explosion.

14 Q. Did you smell gas when you got there?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Oh, you did.

17 A. Um-hum. Because it was blowing. I mean, you could hear it,  
18 it was like a train just fwoosh (ph.).

19 MR. SPILLERS: How far is it to the fire station where the  
20 district chief responded at?

21 MR. EDWARDS: Probably about two streets over or one street  
22 over.

23 MR. ARMON: It's less than a mile.

24 MR. EDWARDS: It's less than a mile.

25 MR. ARMON: And if you go like in a straight line, then it's

1 less than that. I would say about a mile to drive from the area  
2 where the district chief is, but it's like driving down and then  
3 making a turn so you --

4 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

5 MR. ARMON: -- come in at straight line.

6 MR. SPILLERS: So it's northwest of there?

7 MR. ARMON: Northwest, yes.

8 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. And what firehouse is that?

9 MR. ARMON: No, no, no. It would be northeast of the  
10 station.

11 MR. SPILLERS: Northeast.

12 MR. EDWARDS: Twelve.

13 MR. ARMON: Rescue 12. It would be northeast.

14 MR. COTTON: Do you know what street that is?

15 MR. EDWARDS: Which street?

16 MR. COTTON: That 12 is on.

17 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, McFadden.

18 MR. ARMON: McFadden.

19 MR. COTTON: McFadden.

20 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. Yeah, those guys are -- 4:30 in the  
21 morning, they're probably up playing cards, just waiting for  
22 something to do.

23 (Laughter.)

24 MR. EDWARDS: I know I wouldn't. I would sleep.

25 MR. SPILLERS: Watching a rerun of the Cowboys loss.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Um-hum.

2 (Laughter.)

3 MR. SPILLERS: I'm a Packer fan, so -- anything else?

4 MR. ARMON: So you're a Green Bay Packer fan, huh?

5 MR. SPILLERS: Lifelong.

6 MR. ARMON: Yeah.

7 MR. SPILLERS: My dad was a Packer fan. He thought Vince  
8 Lombardi was the greatest coach who ever walked on a football  
9 field. And I liked him, too.

10 MR. COTTON: I believe you might be right.

11 MR. SPILLERS: I could be right. Could be right. When he  
12 said when you get to the end zone act like you've been there  
13 before, I thought that was a cool thing to say.

14 Well, I don't think we have anything more for you. I  
15 appreciate you talking to us. We'll be talking to other people  
16 here. That information, if you guys want to share that with the  
17 district chief or whoever, leadership, about joining the  
18 investigation and Elena will probably be contacting other people  
19 in the fire department and we can discuss whether they want to  
20 become an active participant in it. Again, it usually is not very  
21 involved for the fire people, it just gives them an opportunity to  
22 see our draft report and make comments on it.

23 MR. EDWARDS: Okay.

24 MR. ARMON: You all going to want to hear from everybody who  
25 responded?

1 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, possibly, who we would have, the  
2 district chief for both events, I think those are probably the  
3 people we'd want to talk to.

4 MS. BOZHKO: Yes.

5 MR. ARMON: The district chief of both events?

6 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

7 MR. ARMON: Is Chief Hamlin here today or --

8 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, he's here today.

9 MR. ARMON: Okay. If you want to interview them, that would  
10 be great, but I think Chief Wilder will probably be in tomorrow,  
11 either tomorrow or the next day. I'm not sure, exactly.

12 MS. BOZHKO: Do I call? Do we just schedule something and  
13 they show up? What's the best way?

14 MR. ARMON: Yeah, you can -- you can call me and I can give  
15 you a number --

16 MS. BOZHKO: Okay.

17 MR. ARMON: -- to schedule.

18 MR. SPILLERS: Okay, do you want to get --

19 MS. BOZHKO: Yeah.

20 MR. SPILLERS: -- make sure you got the contact information?

21 MR. ARMON: [REDACTED]

22 MS. BOZHKO: [REDACTED]

23 MR. ARMON: [REDACTED]

24 MS. BOZHKO: [REDACTED]

25 MR. ARMON: [REDACTED]

1 MS. BOZHKO: [REDACTED]. Okay. Do I call you on  
2 that number in the morning?

3 MR. ARMON: In the morning would be fine.

4 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. And what, you're going off shift now or  
5 you're going --

6 MR. EDWARDS: I'll be here until 7:00 in the morning.

7 MR. SPILLERS: Seven in the morning, but then --

8 MR. EDWARDS: Then I'll be out for the next two days.

9 MR. SPILLERS: The next two days, okay. We got a 6 o'clock  
10 meeting, so -- but the other district chief, one of them, Hamlin  
11 is working tonight?

12 MR. ARMON: I'm not sure. Is he here today?

13 MR. EDWARDS: He's here today. Hamlin is the one that went  
14 to the second fire.

15 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

16 MR. EDWARDS: He's here today.

17 MR. ARMON: Shalimar.

18 MR. EDWARDS: Shalimar. He's here today.

19 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. And he's --

20 MR. ARMON: He'll be off for two days.

21 MR. SPILLERS: After 7:00 and start 7:00 in the morning, he's  
22 off or --

23 MR. ARMON: Yeah. So today's Monday, he'll be back Thursday.

24 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

25 MR. EDWARDS: Yeah, that's when I'll be back.



1 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah, we have to figure out if we want to come  
2 back, possibly, could we come back and interview him tonight and  
3 speak to him tonight or is he -- you know.

4 MR. ARMON: He'll be here, but I won't.

5 (Laughter.)

6 MR. SPILLERS: Okay.

7 MR. ARMON: Yeah.

8 MR. EDWARDS: (Indiscernible).

9 MR. ARMON: Huh?

10 MR. EDWARDS: (Indiscernible) station?

11 MR. ARMON: I can probably --

12 MR. EDWARDS: Probably be best.

13 MR. ARMON: Probably can get him back up here tomorrow. I  
14 don't know, I can call and ask him.

15 MR. SPILLERS: Okay. We'll figure something out, how we can  
16 do that. And we've got a meeting at 6:00 and it won't be that  
17 long, but I don't want to -- I know he's working, but he's also  
18 got things he's got to do, so -- but we'll want to talk to him and  
19 the other one and he'll be in tomorrow.

20 MS. BOZHKO: Stop the recording.

21 MR. SPILLERS: Yeah.

22 (Whereupon, a 5:04 p.m., the interview concluded.)  
23  
24  
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

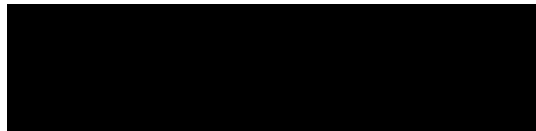
IN THE MATTER OF:           NATURAL GAS LEAKS RESULTING IN FATAL  
                                  HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY 24, 2024 &  
                                  SECOND HOME EXPLOSION ON  
                                  JANUARY 27, 2024 IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI  
                                  Interview of Ronico Edwards

ACCIDENT NO.:                PLD24FR003

PLACE:                         Jackson, Mississippi

DATE:                         January 29, 2024

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.



\_\_\_\_\_  
David A. Martini  
Transcriber



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Transcript Errata

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To: Ronico Edwards

Mr. Ronico Edwards,

Reference: **Interview Regarding the January 24 & 27, 2024, Jackson Mississippi Home Explosions and Fires**

Accident No.: PLD24FR003

Attached is a transcript of your interview on January 29, 2024, as a part of the ongoing investigation of the above referenced accident. The transcript is provided for your review and comment to ensure its accuracy. It is not for public release.

Please review the transcript and make any necessary editorial changes in the attached table or redline a copy of the document. Initial any changes when marking up or redlining the original document.

Please submit replies to me via email no later than April 10, 2024. Requests for an extension of this deadline must be in writing and received prior to the due date. If comments are not received by the due date, we will consider the transcript to be final without comment.

Please note that these transcripts must be treated as confidential at this time. These transcripts are for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone or email.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation,



*Elena Bozhko*

Pipeline Accident Investigator, Office of Railroad,  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW, Washington, DC 20594

[REDACTED]



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Transcript Errata

**TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: Ronico Edwards  
RECORDED ON January 29, 2024**

| PAGE NUMBER | LINE NUMBER | CURRENT WORDING | CORRECTED WORDING |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 5           | 13/15       | Besmond         | Desmond           |
|             |             |                 |                   |
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If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement “no corrections needed” and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED. \_\_\_\_\_  
Initials

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Person providing the above information

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person providing the above information

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date