UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
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FATAL NATURAL GAS EXPLOSION	*	
IN SOUTH JORDAN, UTAH	*	Accident No.: PLD25FR001
ON NOVEMBER 6, 2024	*	
	*	

Interview of: [redacted], Battalion Chief
South Jordan Fire Department

South Jordan, Utah

Monday,
November 11, 2024

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

REID HESS, Region Manager
Enbridge Gas Utah

CHRIS DAWSON, Fire Chief
South Jordan Fire Department

JACOB JORGENSEN, Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

REED THOMPSON, Deputy Chief Fire Marshal
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I N T E R V I E W

MR. LAVALLEE: My name is Scott Lavallee, and I am the NTSB emergency response group chair for this accident. We're conducting an interview today on November the 11th, 2024, with Battalion Chief [redacted] of the South Jordan, Utah, Fire Department.

This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the accident in South Jordan, Utah. The NTSB accident reference number is PLD25FR001. The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame or liability.

Before we begin our interview and questions, we'll go around and introduce ourselves. Please state your name, your title, spell your last name. I'll start off and then pass it to my right.

Again, my name is Scott Lavallee, L-a-v-a-l-l-e-e, and I am the NTSB emergency response group chair for this accident.

MR. HESS: Reid Hess, Enbridge Gas. Last name, H-e-s-s, region manager for Enbridge Gas.

MR. [redacted]: [redacted]. Last name, [redacted], battalion chief with South Jordan Fire Department.

MR. DAWSON: Chris Dawson, D-a-w-s-o-n, the fire chief with South Jordan Fire Department.

MR. JORGENSEN: Jacob Jorgensen, spell Jorgensen, J-o-r-g-e-n-s-e-n. I'm an accident investigator for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Morning.

MR. [redacted]: Morning.

MR. THOMPSON: Reed Thompson, deputy state fire marshal with the Utah State Fire Marshal's office. Thompson, T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n.

MR. LAVALLEE: Battalion Chief [redacted], do we have your permission to record our conversation with you today?

MR. [redacted]: Yes.

MR. LAVALLEE: And we always try to afford you the availability of having a representative with you. Do you wish to have a representative with you today?

MR. [redacted]: No.

MR. LAVALLEE: Battalion Chief [redacted], do you also understand that the transcripts of the interview today will eventually be made public in the docket and, as such, I can't assure any sort of confidentiality?

MR. [redacted]: Yes.

MR. LAVALLEE: All right, thank you.

INTERVIEW OF [redacted]

BY MR. LAVALLE:

Q. Battalion Chief [redacted], if you could, please give us an overview of your career within the fire services up until your current position?

A. I have spent my entire full-time career with South Jordan Fire Department; I've been here for a little over 19 years.

Started out as a firefighter paramedic. I served in that role for 12 years then promoted to a captain, a fire captain. I

served in that position for approximately 3 years prior to promoting battalion chief which I've served for the last 4-1/2 years or so.

Also during my tenure with South Jordan, I have filled the role of fire investigator and currently supervise our investigation division.

Q. All right, thank you for that. Battalion Chief [redacted], in all of those roles that you've had within the fire services that you've just described, do you have any certifications, either state issued or department issued, for those roles?

A. I have my fire investigative technician from the International Association of Arson Investigators as well as all necessary certifications with my state and national paramedic as well as heavy rescue discipline certifications and several other certifications that are required for the positions.

Q. Battalion Chief [redacted], could you describe for us the day of the incident which I show as November the 6th, starting with your working shift for that day and up to the time of the call?

A. The day of the incident was our first day on duty. The morning routine was as it usually is, getting staffing coordinated, rosters sent to our dispatch agency so they know how apparatus is staffed.

And then I had a meeting with the city, the quarterly leadership meeting that lasted the entirety of the morning and into the early afternoon. After that meeting, I would just begin

coordination with my crews.

Our department banquet was scheduled for the night so it was just doing administrative stuff in preparation for the banquet, ensuring that we were going to have coverage from outside agencies as that banquet was scheduled to take place.

And then I was sitting in my office. I had a visitor come to the station from Stryker, who is the company that provides our stretchers and equipment, some of the equipment for the ambulances, letting me know that he was temporarily taking responsibility for the individual who had left, who had retired from Stryker and he was now going to be our point of contact.

I was sitting with him in the office when I was dispatched out onto the incident in question.

Q. So, it sounds like a fairly routine morning, meetings, administrative duties, would that be correct to say?

A. Correct.

Q. Can you describe the working schedule that you operate on here at the department?

A. As a combat battalion chief, I am on the same schedule that the rest of the floor personnel are on. I work two days on and have four days off.

As previously mentioned, this was our first day back on duty. Our shift changes at 07:00 and -- yeah.

Q. Thank you for that. So, you brought us right up to the time of the call when I believe you said that you were in your office

at that time, is that correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Where is your office, is it at this premises?
A. My office is at Station 61 so the address for there is 10758 South Redwood Road.
Q. Battalion Chief [redacted], when you received the call, how did you receive the call, would that be a phone call, would it be radio tones, how would you have received that?
A. We were dispatched at the station so tones went off at the station along with the overhead dispatch. With the initial assignment, it had come in as explosion and then the given address.
Q. And that would be what you would consider a normal means of contact for such an event?
A. Correct.
Q. Incident types of explosion, are those, in your words, would explosions be a common sort of call to receive?
A. It would not be a common call that I would say is something you respond to on a regular basis.
Q. When explosion calls do come out, what sort of, if any, special considerations go through your mind when you are faced with an explosion-type call?
A. With explosive-type calls, some of the same general things that apply to, say, a house fire or some of the other larger incidences, the safety comes in mind.

I start worrying about if there, I'm trying to think what may or may not have caused the explosion as your enroute, but then also what potential evacuations zones do we need to have and that if this was an explosion.

Q. When thinking about those sorts of risks that you just mentioned or those sorts of considerations, do you make assumptions according to what you think the cause may have been while, before responding to the call?

A. I do not.

Q. Thank you for that. Continuing on from receiving the call, can you describe to us the events that took place between receiving the call and then arriving on scene for us, please?

A. As mentioned, I was in my office with an individual from Stryker.

When the tones went off, I stood up and escorted him out the front door and then went to my rig and went enroute, both on our MDT as well as over the radio. MDT's a computer terminal in the, you've got to push button to show that you're enroute.

Once all the other units were enroute, they gave dispatch details, upgraded it to a house fire and proceeded to the incident address.

While responding to the address, I was at approximately South Jordan Parkway and 2200 West when, and that is what we call a header, a large column of smoke rising above the tree line. At which point, I made working fire notifications and as well is, I

requested two additional engines to respond to the scene.
Q. Can you describe for someone who may read these transcripts at a later day what the significance of establishing that this is a working fire, what's the significance of that?
A. So, by establishing working fire notifications, it just starts additional apparatus coming and starts as an additional ambulance, it starts as an air and light truck for the firefighters to rehab their air bottles, also have some nourishment. It also contacts all the local utilities that we do have an incident so that they are notified and they start responding from there.

It also makes notifications across, to our fire chief or deputy chief and other individuals in leadership positions across the city.
Q. Battalion Chief [redacted], would it be safe to say that marking it as an active fire is a safeguard, right, to say that, yes, this is an actual event, this is not a false alarm or anything of that nature, this is an actual event and this is as, this is something that we do need to respond to, would that be correct?
A. Correct. It makes those notifications that there is an actual incident. Those notifications, making working fire notification is standard on all house fires or larger incidents.

MR. LAVALLEE: Thank you for that. I'm going to allow an opportunity to pass it off to my right for further questions.

MR. HESS: Hess, Enbridge, nothing now.

MR. LAVALLEE: Okay. I'll continue on.

BY MR. LAVALLEE:

Q. Upon driving to the scene, so once you're in the neighborhood of the affected residence, what did you witness, if anything, whilst driving in apart from the column of smoke that you saw?

A. There was a column of smoke. When I made a left-hand turn off of South Jordan Parkway onto 3200 West, you could see that there was debris scattered across 3200 West. There was multiple cars in the road that appeared to be trying to figure out how to navigate through the debris to continue on their drive.

I turned into the neighborhood. At this point, I would estimate that I was probably about 30 seconds behind Engine 62 which was the first arriving engine on scene, and had assumed command and given a size up of the house that had exploded.

As I said, I was about 30 seconds behind them. They hadn't even had the opportunity to pull a hose line off the engine yet. They were in the process of starting it, but nothing had been deployed. I made a face-to-face contact with the captain of that apparatus, notified him that I would take command.

I had positioned my truck in a cul-de-sac north of the incident address so that I was out of the way as we needed to bring other apparatus into the scene, that way I wasn't blocking the larger fire apparatus.

I assumed command of the home or of the incident, and I began making assignments as appropriate. The first assignment was

Engine 62. I had them pull a two and a half inch handline to the back of the house where the vast majority of the fire was, the back of the house being the east side of the home, the home faced west, and they began those suppressive efforts.

As additional units arrived, we pulled subsequent hose lines off to both the front side of the house as well as a second hose line to the back to extinguish fire in various locations of the home.

Q. Let me, a point of clarification. You said upon arrival approximately 30 seconds or so behind the first responding units, you said that you made contact with the chief of that unit and assumed incident command responsibilities.

A. Yeah, it was the captain of that apparatus.

Q. The captain?

A. Yes.

Q. I'm sorry. And for the record, could you tell us the name of that captain that you relieved?

A. Captain [redacted]

Q. Captain [redacted] thank you. Can you briefly, I mean, you kind of described the plan of attack as far as what lines you're deploying, can you just give us a brief description of the structure of the home as you recall it from that day upon arrival?

A. Yes. As I parked my truck north of the incident in that cul-de-sac, there was also debris across the road there, the garage door was across the street, there was glass all over in the

road, significant debris in the yard as well as the neighboring yard.

My observations immediately going into command was that there, the remaining walls of the home consisted of approximately 20 to 25 feet of the wall that the entry door was on. With the exception of that, the garage was intact; however, significantly compromised. The bonus room above the garage, they had already collapsed into the garage on our arrival or prior to our arrival. The south side of the garage was significantly compromised in leaning out several feet which we made notification that those operating on the fire scene needed to avoid that; it was a significant collapse hazard.

Beyond that, my initial observations were that the remaining walls, the north wall, the east wall and the south wall of the actual home, excluding the garage, were no longer intact.

Q. Based upon those observations enroute and once initially at the scene and you surveyed it, was what you saw consistent with the initial call of an explosion event?

A. Yes. And if I may, stepping back, Captain [redacted] on his arrival had asked for an entire second alarm upgrading from the additional two engines that I had asked for.

Q. In your opinion, that move from Captain [redacted], would that have been an appropriate call from him to have made?

A. Very.

Q. Thank you for that. With the information that you have, the

observations that you made, both the surrounding neighborhood and the structure itself being consistent with an explosion, what precautions, if any, were taken because it was an explosion event?
A. As I already mentioned, we had identified that there was significant structurally compromise to the garage. We were avoiding that area as well as keeping crews away from that front wall of the house. It was the only remaining wall and that was compromised; however, it was still standing. I didn't want to have any firefighters get hurt.

After the initial assignments were made for our initial fire attack operations, I sent several crews to neighboring houses to ensure that evacuation had taken place of those. The house directly to the north of the incident had some significant damage to the exterior wall as well as windows. There was significant debris on their roof.

As it appeared that most of the debris or the explosive force kind of went to the north northeast direction out of the home is where most the debris was located. There was some in the front yard and most of it was to the back yard and to the north, and into the neighbor's yard.

Ensuring that those were evacuated and did a quick preliminary assessments by firefighters on structural damage on those, if we had anything that we had significant concern with as far as a potential collapse of those structures, those were reported back that structurally, we didn't need to have any

shoring or stabilization take place of those structures.

Not knowing the exact timeline, utilities and both, gas and electric, seemed to show up relatively quick. We had, I had the power company shut down power to both the affected home as well as the one immediately to the north. The gas company, have due to the explosion and the way that the way had blown out, we did not have access to the meter on the affected home to be able to shut the gas off at the meter like we usually would at a house fire.

I relayed this to the individual from the gas company. He said that when he had other people arrive on scene, they would locate the gas line in a front yard and dig down and shut the gas off there.

So, there was a -- due to the, like I said, the collapse and the condition of that north wall, we did not have access to the gas meter to isolate the gas as we normally would have.

Q. You talked about your observations arriving on scene, the precautions that you took, can you describe what that evacuation perimeter was? For example, two houses to the north and two houses to the south, what did that look like as far as evacuation of neighbors?

A. So, the evacuation of neighbors, I mean, we evacuated the houses both to the north and to the south.

As far as bystanders on the scene, I had our police department push everybody -- there's two cul-de-sacs that put, that the house is on, there's two cul-de-sacs that come off to the

west of that street. I had our police department create a perimeter at both of those cul-de-sacs to keep people back to those areas and help keep people away and out of where we were operating.

Q. Just to clarify, Battalion Chief [redacted], it's one house to the north, one house to the south, initially, for evacuation?

A. Correct.

Q. Were there any residents in those houses as far as you were aware at that time?

A. There were residents in the house to the north that were evacuated. And the house to the south initially there was, they had knocked on the door and had no contact. They reported back to me that nobody was answering the door and then several minutes later, they reported that they had made contact with the homeowner and that evacuation take place.

Q. Thank you. You talked about what you observed at the scene, were you able to observe or smell any particular odors that might be associated with an explosion-type event?

A. I was not able to smell any particular odors associated with an explosion event. It smelled like a house fire.

We were aware that we had some natural gas and we knew this, that we weren't able to shut the meter down. Every now and again, we'd get a flare up and operations personnel on scene would see that this would flare up occasionally. We didn't know where a leak was or wasn't occurring, but we also knew that we hadn't been

able to shut it down and that our, when we got the gas shut down that that would more likely than not take care of what kept flaring.

Q. In regards to the flare up that you've just described, were you, yourself, able to visually observe one or any of those flare ups?

A. From my position on the west side of the home, I was not.

Q. Did you --

A. It was reported back to me from -- I'd assigned Battalion 51, who's West Jordan, and Battalion 12 with Unified Fire, I assigned them to the Charlie and Bravo divisions. Charlie division being the back side of the home, the east side, and the Bravo division being the north side of the home.

I had two other battalion chiefs there who reported that it is was, they could see it flaring up. But from my observation, I could not see it.

Q. Thank you for that. In regards to the flare ups that were described and reported, was any information made available to you as to where within the structure those flare ups were occurring?

For example, were they reported near a gas meter, were they reported in the south corner of the basement, anything of that nature as far as where those flare ups may have been occurring?

A. When they were pointed out to me, it was pointed out that it was on that north wall area in the debris field there.

Q. And that north wall, was that also the side of the house that

also had the gas service line, to your knowledge?
A. Yes, that's where we believed the gas meter was as we were unable to locate it. And then when I talked with the first arriving individual from the gas company, he confirmed that it would have been on the north side of that home.
Q. So, at that point, consistent with the information you had regarding the location of the flare ups and the gas service, did it seem likely, more likely than not that that flare up may have been coming from the service line to the residence?
A. I would not feel comfortable saying where that leak, where that flare up was or was not coming from, whether it was from a line inside the house that had been pushed outside or from a service line.
Q. Fair enough, I appreciate that. Continuing on with your activities there on scene as incident command, do you recall approximately how we became aware that there may have been a victim inside the home?
A. While I was running the scene, I was approached from behind by a young male who tapped me on the shoulder and told me that his brother had been inside the house.
Prior to this, there was no notification from dispatch or anything on the radio that would have indicated we had a victim inside the home.
Q. In summary, the first notification that there may have been a victim inside the home came from what was reported to be the

brother of the person that was thought to be inside the home, is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Having knowledge that there may potentially be a victim inside the residence, did that fundamentally change the tactics which you were employing to combat the fire?

A. It did, it changed the methods we were doing to combat the fire; however, I did immediately begin assigning additional personnel to both the Charlie and Bravo division to begin the opportunity to start removing some of the debris in the yard.

Entering into the basement of the home was not safe at that point in time. We still had active fire and significant collapse hazards with pieces of the home still over hanging the garage, and I was not in a position where I was going to commit fire personnel in there, into the basement.

The exterior of the home, the yard, the neighbor's yard and the debris throughout that area were searched with nothing coming back as far as location of the victim.

South Jordan Police Department had also, as I mentioned earlier, they were on scene as they typically are for house fires. They deployed their drone then we were able to get aerial footage of the area as well as use an infrared camera on there also looking for heat signatures that would have been abnormal.

MR. LAVALLEE: Thank you for that. I'm going to give another opportunity to go around in case anybody has some subsequent

questions based upon the answers so far, to my right.

MR. HESS: I've got a few. Hess, Enbridge Utah, H-e-s-s.

BY MR. HESS:

Q. First point, how do you determine how far to evacuate based on an explosion?

A. I initially just evacuated those first two houses, I didn't have a hard and fast guideline to go on those. But evacuating those first two, not having an understanding of what may have caused the initial explosion, once we get into those, we could use the Emergency Response Guidebook that gives evacuation guidelines, but I did not use that on this incident.

Q. Okay, thank you. Let's see. Do you recall the specific conversations you had with any of Enbridge's employees?

A. As I mentioned, I had a very brief conversation with the initial technician who had arrived on scene and told him we were unable to shut off the gas as it was, we suspected the gas meter was on the north side of the home.

He confirmed that. And then he told me that they would have to dig into the yard to shut it down, but he would have to wait for additional personnel prior to digging and shutting that line down.

Q. Regarding communication with Enbridge, do you feel like the communication that was necessary took place in a reasonable fashion?

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. Regarding the flare ups you talked about, I know you didn't see them, did anybody report to you the size or the duration of each of those flare ups?
A. Not duration. They just said they, we kept having small flare ups on that.
Q. Okay. And then do you recall ever smelling natural gas or odors associated with natural gas while you were there?
A. I do not recall, no.
MR. HESS: Thank you. That's it for me.
MR. DAWSON: Yeah, Chris Dawson, South Jordan Fire Department. Just one question. Do you have a sense of how long into the incident it was when you were approached by the brother that reported the victim?
MR. [redacted]: I would estimate that that was probably within the first 5 to 10 minutes; it was early on in the incident.
MR. DAWSON: Thank you.
MR. THOMPSON: Chief [redacted], do -- this is from Thompson.
BY MR. THOMPSON:
Q. Do you have a recollection not only when you were arriving or enroute as to color of smoke and then subsequently as the incident progressed, any description on what you saw there?
A. There was nothing in the dispatch details. The first smoke that I saw, like I said, from the area of 22nd, 2200 West and South Jordan Parkway, appeared to be lighter in color, almost like a dust mix associated with it. By the time I had reached

3200 West, it had turned to a dark black, typical of a house fire.
Q. You had mentioned flare up information came from both Battalion 51 and Battalion 12?
A. I can't recall specifically who had told me that, it was the just the battalions operating in those divisions.
Q. Okay. Which would have been on the north and east?
A. And east.
MR. THOMPSON: Okay. I think that's it for now.
MR. LAVALLEE: Lavallee, NTSB.
BY MR. LAVALLEE:
Q. Battalion Chief [redacted], and know the records are out there so exact isn't necessary, but in your best estimation, how long did it take for the fire to be considered what you would call under control?
A. We had what I would consider knocked down to take place probably within the hour. Really probably within about 45 minutes, we had knocked down to where I was ready to start sending personnel into the basement to resume search.
Q. Thank you for that. Battalion Chief [redacted], at any point during your time there on scene, did your actions or the actions of fire services, shift at all from a potential recovery, I'm sorry, a potential rescue to a likely recovery scenario?
A. If I may step back. One other assignment I had made is Ladder 53 coming out of West Jordan, I had assigned them initially as part of the suppressive efforts to establish an elevated master

stream on the Charlie side. They positioned on 3200 West and begin extinguishments with an elevated master stream there.

As far as our operations, if there was significant shift of our operations due to the condition of the home, as I mentioned, I had crews begin a search through the debris outside of the home; however, due to the condition of the home and in my experience, I did not believe that it was possible that anybody inside the home would have still been alive.

As soon as I was notified that the brother was potentially, by his brother, that there was somebody potentially inside the home, my immediate thought was if somebody was in the home that this will be a recovery operation, that what we saw was not conducive with life.

Q. So, to summarize and perhaps recap a little based upon your observations coming to and upon scene seeing the debris scatter, the condition of the structure, it didn't seem likely that there would have been a survivor if there was, in fact, an individual in the home, is that correct to say?

A. Correct, not likely at all.

Q. Thank you for that. To the best of your recollection, Battalion Chief [redacted], when and where was the body of the victim recovered?

A. Okay. And I'll also step back to your previous question. Once we had fire knocked down and I was ready to commit resources into the basement of the home, with the exception of two units who

were still putting water on some of the hot spots in the basement, I called for a tactical pause for all fire ground operations minus those, minus the two hose lines.

I did this to bring everybody together so that we were all on the same page and notify that, you know, for those who had, for those individuals there, like, that we still were looking for a potential victim, notified that we were going to be switching from active fire suppression as the fire had been extinguished at this time or knocked down, to searching for the potential victim.

So, after this tactical pause, all my assignments were geared towards the work cycles of approximately 20 minutes of getting crews in, removing debris out of the basement and starting to clear areas.

As we continued to do that for the next several hours, it was approximately 9:30, 21:30 at night when we were removing debris on the front side of the home of the basement that there was a cold storage area directly under the porch to the south of that, there was a little alcove in the basement and in removing debris in there is when we located the victim. Like I said, that was about 21:30 at night.

Q. Thank you for that. Stepping back to your answer, the tactical pause that you described, if you had to estimate roughly what time that tactical pause took place, what would be your best estimate?

A. I would estimate that that probably took place about 5:00 or

5:30.

Q. In regards to the Enbridge employees that you made contact with and per your testimony stated that you were receiving flare ups within the house or flare ups were being reported within the house and the request to turn gas service off to the house, to the best of your knowledge and recollection, did Enbridge report back to you at any time stating we now have gas service turned off to the residence?

A. They did.

Q. Roughly to the best of your recollection, what time would that have been?

A. I would estimate that would probably be somewhere between 4:30 and 5:00, somewhere between 4:00 and 5:00. I'd have a hard time on that hours. But I did know that they reported back to me and we reported the flare ups to Enbridge and they were like, yeah we'll, they recognized that those were, that they had been reported and would get that gas shut down as soon as they could.

Q. Thank you for that. Battalion Chief [redacted], in regards to the communication from Enbridge confirming that they had shut off gas service at the service line to the home, to the best of your knowledge and recollection, did flare ups continue after that point?

A. No.

Q. Would it be fair to say, Battalion Chief [redacted], that it appeared that shutting off gas service to the home had the desired

effect on the flare ups, would that be fair to say?
A. Yes.
Q. Thank you. All right, Battalion Chief [redacted], just a couple more in regards to the firefighting and recovery efforts.
At what point were, to the best of your recollection and knowledge, did we begin wrapping up our firefighting activities or active firefighting and recovery activities for the night and start to release assets from the scene?
A. Once the, as I had mentioned earlier, it was approximately 21:30 that we really were able to locate the victim of the home. At that point, I once again pulled all units operating on the scene together for a notification because people had been working in and out that we had located the victim.
At which point, I released the majority of all units on scene. I kept Engine 62 and Engine 63, both South Jordan units, on scene as well as Heavy Rescue 117 from Unified Fire on scene. I released all the other units.
At that point is fire, or we had to work some minimal hot spots and the victim had been located so there wasn't a reason to keep the large amount of units we had on scene still on scene.
Q. Thank you for that. Battalion Chief [redacted], in regards to the active perimeter of the scene, was it deemed necessary at any point to maintain a perimeter on the property continuing into the next morning?
A. It was. In addition to South Jordan Police Department, those

initial exclusion zones that I had discussed, they had also blocked off 3200 West, I don't know where they had blocked that off, but they reported back to me that 3200 West had been shut down, and that we had made contact with our dispatch center requesting a board up company. My request also entailed fencing to secure the perimeter of the property to ensure that there was exclusion to take place.

They had responded out and erected fencing over the majority of the property. They didn't have enough that night for the entirety of the property. I told them my priority at that point would be for them to insert, the entire east side of the yard was fenced off as we did not have visual on that, and then with the remaining fence, they could secure the west side of the home.

I did through assignments ensure that we had fire coverage or fire watch over the incident throughout the night. South Jordan fire personnel were on scene throughout the rest of the night into the morning until investigators showed back up.

Q. To the best of your knowledge, Battalion Chief [redacted], were there any flare ups from the initial extinguishing of the structure throughout the night that you're aware of?

A. There were no reports of flare ups or rekindle of anything. They said there was still a couple of hot spots that they watched but nothing reignited.

Q. Thank you for that. In regards to the evacuation order that you had initiated on scene which I believe, you know, confirm or

correct this if you may, one house north, one house south of the incident house, at what point, if it was done, were those houses released back or no longer under evacuation order?

A. The house to the south was released back that night. The house to the north, my understanding is after testing with Enbridge personnel, they were checking for gas in the area, in the soil, that the house to the north still had, or not still, but had elevated levels of gas in the home in the soil around it, and that one remained evacuated over or at least through the night and into the next day.

I don't know if or when that one was released back to the homeowner.

Q. Would it be fair to say that the house to the north which you just stated remained under evacuation order from the gas company, from Enbridge, that at that point that was the sole evacuation order?

In other words, would you have, barring whatever Enbridge had going on with gas readings and things like that, as far as fire department operations were concerned, were you done with both those houses at that point?

A. Correct, and we had also informed the homeowner of that home that the power had been shut down to his home. The power company shut both houses down at the street rather than at the meter on either home.

Q. You may not know the answer to this, Battalion Chief [redacted],

but would the power had been shut off in conjunction with the information that there was levels of gas within in the home, would that in your opinion be the reason why?

A. No. I had the power shut off to the home early on in this incident strictly due to some of the structural compromise and the damage that had occurred to that home and not knowing where wiring was at.

It's not uncommon, I would say it's standard practice so when we have significant damage to homes that we begin isolating utilities.

I did ask personnel who had assessed the home if there's a need to shut down gas to the home. They did not believe at that point from their preliminary assessment that it was necessary to shut down the gas to the home. But power was shut down out of an abundance of caution with the damage to that exterior wall.

Q. Thank you for the clarification. Battalion Chief [redacted], just a couple extra ones here before I send it around one more time.

I understand from your testimony that resources were left through the night into the next morning to maintain fire watch; however, if we had to say a time when the firefighting, active firefighting activity ceased and you released those assets as we described earlier, what time in your, to best of your recollection and knowledge, would that have been that we just left the overnight resources there and curtailed the rest of our activities?

A. That would have been approximately 03:00 in the morning. Midnight, 12:30 in the morning is when, is the approximate time that we left the fire watch.

Q. And to your knowledge by that time when we're shutting down shop, had there been any determination, causal determination for the fire and/or explosion by that point?

A. No, there had not been any determination.

Q. And who had the investigative burden at that point to determine causality?

A. Investigators on scene were Investigator [redacted], Investigator [redacted] from the South Jordan Fire Department. We had Investigator [redacted], deputy, the state fire marshal, on scene as well as [redacted] with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms on scene.

Deputy Fire Marshal [redacted] can correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe the state fire marshal's office is leading out on the investigation.

MR. THOMPSON: Correct.

MR. LAVALLEE: Thank you for that.

MR. JORGENSEN: Could you restate those names, please. Jorgensen.

MR. [redacted]: Investigator [redacted], [redacted] and then [redacted]; he's with South Jordan Fire Department. Investigator [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]. [redacted], I have to look at my phone to see if it's an en or an on.

MR. LAVALLEE: It's on.

MR. [redacted]: [redacted] with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. And [redacted], we already have his spelling.

MR. LAVALLEE: Thank you for that.

MR. THOMPSON: If -- this is from [redacted]. I also have one additional member of our team from Utah State Fire Marshal's Office and that was [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted].

MR. LAVALLEE: Thank you for that. Battalion Chief [redacted], were any injuries reported or sustained by any member of the firefighting group that evening?

MR. [redacted]: None that were reported.

MR. LAVALLEE: That's all I have for now. I'm going to pass it around on my right for any follow ups.

MR. HESS: Hess, Enbridge Gas. A couple of them. I believe what you said was you were aware there was some natural gas in the building north, into the home north of the home that exploded, do you recall how you found that out?

MR. [redacted]: It was reported to me by -- I'm not sure who reported it to me, but it was reported to me on scene that there had been gas found in the home.

MR. HESS: Do you recall if that was a fire department individual or an Enbridge individual?

MR. [redacted]: I believe it was another representative of the fire department.

MR. HESS: Thank you. Let's see. That's all I've got for

now, thank you.

MR. DAWSON: Chris Dawson, South Jordan Fire Department. Just one question regarding the flare ups. In your opinion, do you have a sense of what caused those, if it was natural gas or could it have been other, anything else in the house?

MR. [redacted]: Based on how it was described to me and how it was expressed by those operating on that Charlie and Bravo division, their reports to me is they felt that it was natural gas coming back and firefighting that gas and flaring up. They did not have, their report to me did not have any indication that it was structural components that were continuing to reignite.

MR. DAWSON: All right, thank you.

MR. JORGENSEN: This is Jorgensen with PHMSA. Could we revisit the evacuations of the homes, how many homes do you believe were first evacuated?

MR. [redacted]: Two, one immediately to the north and one immediately to the south.

MR. JORGENSEN: Were any others evacuated other than those?

MR. [redacted]: Not to my knowledge.

MR. JORGENSEN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Chief [redacted], as this -- this is Thompson.

BY MR. THOMPSON:

Q. As this progressed, with your investigation experience, did you have any other knowledge or opinions based on what you saw that would indicate where you think a cause or origin would have

been on the fire?
A. I intentionally stayed out of the investigative process as the IC and that. I didn't do anything as far as digging or taking a significant look at fire patterns or burn patterns associated with that. So, I would not be able to give you an accurate assessment of that.
Q. Okay. Did at any point either Firefighter [redacted], excuse me, Engineer [redacted] or Captain [redacted] report anything finding wise to you?
A. The night of the incident, I believe that it was determined to be, it had more likely than not started in the basement, but they did not have a final determination as to where in the basement. That was going to be determined the next day under daylight hours.
Q. Just a confirmation on the victim removal, do you recall a time when the victim was, I guess custody was taken by the medical examiner?
A. I don't have an exact time on that. As I mentioned, we had located the victim approximately 21:30. I suspected it would be about 23:00 by the time the medical examiner had shown up, taken the pictures and we had assisted in the removal of the victim from the basement and turned over to the medical examiner's office.
Q. Have you been back to the scene since the night of the event?
A. The following day I went back to do a follow-up visit with my crew who was, one of the crews who had remained on scene overnight

as well as to ensure that the investigators had what they needed to continue their investigation that following day. Beyond that, I haven't gone back to revisit the scene.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. That's it.

MR. LAVALLEE: Last chance.

MR. HESS: Yeah, Hess, Enbridge. On one of the, I was busy taking notes and apologize for that, you were talking about somebody suggesting that natural gas might have been involved, if I caught that as I was talking, does that ring a bell?

MR. [redacted]: It was simply that the, those over the Charlie and Bravo divisions seem to think that it was gas that was flaring up when they reported the flare ups back to myself as command. It was their opinion that they thought it was gas not, you know, it was (indiscernible).

MR. HESS: Thank you for clarifying that.

MR. [redacted]: Hm-hmm.

MR. HESS: I appreciate it.

MR. LAVALLEE: Battalion Chief [redacted], we've asked you an awful lot of questions here today, and I appreciate you being with us today. Do you have anything that you'd like to share with the investigative panel?

MR. [redacted]: No.

MR. LAVALLEE: Would there be anyone that you can think of that the investigative panel would benefit from speaking to additionally?

MR. [redacted]: Not at this point.

MR. LAVALLEE: Battalion Chief [redacted], we have your contact information that you provided us with, if additional questions arise, would you be opposed to us reaching out to you?

MR. [redacted]: No.

MR. LAVALLEE: Battalion Chief [redacted], on behalf of the NTSB, I would like to end the investigative panel assembled here today. I'd like to thank you for your time and cooperation in this matter. That concludes our interview.

MR. [redacted]: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FATAL NATURAL GAS EXPLOSION IN SOUTH JORDAN, UTAH ON NOVEMBER 6, 2024 Interview of [redacted]
ACCIDENT NO.:	PLD25FR001
PLACE:	South Jordan, Utah
DATE:	November 11, 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.

[redacted]

Transcriber