

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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THE EXPLOSION OF APARTMENT
BUILDING 8701 OF FLOWER BRANCH
APARTMENTS IN SILVER SPRING,
MARYLAND ON AUGUST 10, 2016

Accident No.: DCA16FP003

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Interview of: CHASE FABRIZIO

Fire Station 16
111 University Boulevard East
Silver Spring, Maryland

Tuesday,
February 14, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

KALU KELLY EMEABA, Pipeline Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEVEN PRICE, Assistant Vice President for
System Operations
Washington Gas

LT. WILLIAM OLIN, Fire and Explosives Investigator
Montgomery County, Maryland

JOHN CLEMENTSON, Assistant Chief Engineer
Public Service Commission of Maryland

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Chase Fabrizio:		
By Mr. Chhatre		6
By Lt. Olin		20
By Mr. Price		20
By Mr. Emeaba		27
By Mr. Chhatre		35
By Mr. Price		46

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. CHHATRE: On the record.

3 Good morning. Today is Tuesday, February 14, 2017. We are
4 currently at the Fire Station 16, located at 111 University
5 Boulevard, Silver Spring, Maryland. We are meeting regarding the
6 investigation of explosion of Building 8701 Flower Branch
7 Apartments, Silver Spring, Maryland, that occurred on August 10,
8 2016.

9 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I'm with National Transportation
10 Safety Board located in Washington, D.C., and I am investigator in
11 charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation number for this
12 accident is DCA16FP003.

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

18 Also, I would like to inform Mr. Chris Fabrizio --

19 LT. FABRIZIO: Chase.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Chase -- I'm sorry -- Chase Fabrizio that you
21 are permitted to have one other person present with you during the
22 interview. This is a person of your choice: your supervisor,
23 friend, family member or, if you choose, no one at all.

24 Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your
25 name, organization that you work for, your title, business contact

1 information such as mailing address, email, telephone number, and
2 whom you have chosen to be present with you during the interview.

3 MR. FABRIZIO: My name is Chase, C-h-a-s-e; last name
4 Fabrizio, F-a-b-r-i-z-i-o. I represent Montgomery County Fire and
5 Rescue Service. I'm a lieutenant with the organization. My
6 business address is 111 University Boulevard East, Silver Spring,
7 Maryland 20901. Business phone number: [REDACTED]. Email
8 address: chase -- [REDACTED] --
9 [REDACTED]. And choose to have no one present.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you for that.

11 Now I would like to go around the room and have each person
12 introduce themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your
13 name, your title and the organization that you represent, and your
14 business contact information. Starting from my left.

15 MR. CLEMENTSON: John Clementson, C-l-e-m-e-n-t-s-o-n,
16 assistant chief engineer with the Public Service Commission of
17 Maryland. Phone number is [REDACTED].

18 LT. OLIN: William Olin, fire and explosives investigator for
19 Montgomery County. Phone number: [REDACTED]. Email: william
20 -- [REDACTED].

21 MR. PRICE: Steve Price. I'm assistant VP for system
22 operations at Washington Gas. My email address is
23 [REDACTED], and my telephone number is [REDACTED].

24 MR. EMEABA: My name is Kalu Kelly Emeaba; K-a-l-u, K-e-l-l-
25 y, E-m-e-a-b-a. I'm an NTSB investigator.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much.

2 INTERVIEW OF CHASE FABRIZIO

3 BY MR. CHHATRE:

4 Q. Mr. Fabrizio, we understand there was an odor call at the
5 building that exploded maybe a few weeks ago. Can you just walk
6 us through if you participated in responding to that call?

7 A. You're talking about a few weeks prior to the explosion?

8 Q. The explosion, correct.

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Just walk us through, give us a date, whatever you recall.
11 Just walk us through the entire scenario.

12 A. Okay. I do not remember the exact date off the top of my
13 head. I do remember that we were on air clearing another call,
14 returning back to the station, when we were dispatched for the
15 odor of gas in the building.

16 We pulled up on the alpha-delta corner of the building and
17 staged there. I had a crew of four personnel. Myself, my lineman
18 and the paramedic got off the rig dressed in our full PPE with our
19 SCBA. The lineman brought the 4-gas iTX meter with him. On the
20 way to the building he turned the meter on to allow it to go
21 through it's warm-up process and zero itself.

22 As we were walking up to the building, didn't notice any odor
23 of gas. When we walked up to the front of the building, if I
24 remember correctly, I believe it was the apartment to the left of
25 the main entrance, there were a few people sitting on a front

1 terrace. Explained to them that somebody called to report an odor
2 of gas, asked them if they had smelled anything. They said no.

3 We walked into the -- through the front door and was met by
4 an occupant who stated that he smelled gas around the area where
5 the mailboxes were located. Didn't smell anything with our
6 natural nose or smell sort of say. My lineman came in with his
7 meter, didn't pick anything up on his meter. If I remember
8 correctly, I believe I took the lineman and the paramedic and sent
9 them up to the top floor and start working their way down and
10 asked them to check apartments. I went down to the terrace level,
11 the lowest level of the apartment building, and knocked on some
12 doors to try to get an idea of if I could smell anything down
13 there. I didn't.

14 I believe I met my crew on the second floor. They said they
15 had knocked on some doors, didn't have any answer in a couple
16 apartments. They had a couple apartments that let them in. They
17 said they didn't get any odor or any reading on the meters there.
18 We came down and knocked on the main level apartment doors and
19 weren't able to get into a couple of them; a couple we were able
20 to. Again, nothing on the monitors -- nothing on the meter,
21 nothing by our smell.

22 And the paramedic made the -- he made -- he said he smelled
23 something, wasn't sure if it was gas or not. So we started going
24 around to a couple more apartments. And there was one in
25 particular that my lineman knocked on and couldn't smell -- he had

1 an odor, he said, but he wasn't sure what it was. So I keep an
2 aluminum wedge in my pocket for forceful entry and to help gap
3 doors. So we started taking the wedge and flexing the corner of
4 the metal frame -- metal doors and metal frames. And we've had
5 success in the past of, you know, you gap the door and you put the
6 meter up there and you can pick up a reading.

7 So he didn't get anything. He said he still -- one of them
8 said they thought they smelled something from the apartment. So
9 made the decision that we were going to force the door. So we
10 start getting ready to force the door and the occupant of that
11 apartment came in with a handful of groceries and said -- you
12 know, there was a language barrier, didn't speak English. He
13 opened up the door, allowed us to go in.

14 We searched the apartment. We monitored the kitchen area and
15 the stove, the oven, behind the stove. If I remember correctly,
16 we went into the utility room that services the apartment that has
17 the heat and HVAC system where the gas lines run up through there
18 as well, checked in there. Didn't find anything. The only thing
19 we could smell was they had the -- I remember they had the Glade
20 plug-in so the whole apartment just smelled of almost sort of like
21 bubblegum or something like that. Again, nothing on the meters.

22 So we went downstairs. There's a -- and there's apartments
23 on the lower level. There's a utility room. Usually it's the
24 same room as the washer and dryers, where usually the gas service
25 comes into the building and they have all the gas meters.

1 We went to retrieve the Knox-Box keys. Are you familiar with
2 the Knox-Box?

3 Q. No.

4 A. So it's a brown box that has usually the master keys for the
5 building in there -- excuse me -- and the fire department is the
6 only one that has access. We have a key that's keyed to all those
7 boxes throughout the county.

8 So retrieved the keys from the Knox-Box. Well, they recently
9 changed the locks on the storage room and the utility laundry room
10 and our keys didn't work. So again, we put the metal wedge in
11 there, flexed the door, monitored, metered the void space. Didn't
12 pick anything up on the meter.

13 And came back through again. We exited the building. The
14 people outside, I remember asking if everything was okay. And we
15 explained to them that, you know, we were, again, called out for
16 odor of gas, we didn't smell anything. Again they denied that
17 they didn't smell anything. And explained to them, look, you
18 know, if you guys see or smell anything, you know, by all means
19 call us back.

20 I don't remember the exact timing of it, but I do remember
21 Master Firefighter Appleby, who was the wagon driver that evening,
22 he took a lap around the exterior of the building and the exposure
23 building, which would be 8703. He said that he walked around both
24 buildings, didn't have an outside odor. Said he met some people
25 in the common area, asked them if they had an odor of gas as well.

1 They denied anything.

2 We marked it up as nothing found and went in service.

3 Q. Okay. So, again, on the second floor you said you were about
4 to wedge open the door and the owner came in and he opened the
5 door.

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And you looked into his apartment?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. You mentioned something about the furnace area or --

10 A. So the -- those apartments, off of usually one of the
11 bedrooms that backs up to the balcony there is usually a utility
12 closet in there that has an air handler. And I believe that there
13 are gas lines that run up through there as well. So anytime we
14 have a reported odor of gas in the buildings, we -- you know, sort
15 of standard practice to check our main sources. Usually it's the
16 kitchen and that utility room when it's -- when we have a defined
17 apartment. If somebody from apartment 201 said "I smell gas in my
18 apartment," those are usually our two areas that we concentrate
19 on. If we don't find anything there, then we usually check above
20 and below and see if we can find anything else.

21 Q. So going back to the odor call, how do you get the odor call
22 at first? Just you have One Call system or --

23 A. So somebody calls 911 and makes a report. That 911 call goes
24 to a central communications center. When they receive all the
25 information, they type it into a computer. The computer, what we

1 refer to as our CAD, our computer automated dispatch, looks at the
2 units that are available, which area it's in, and will
3 automatically assign a unit to the call.

4 I have what we call an MBC, which is a mobile data computer,
5 in the front of the fire truck. And when a call gets sent to me,
6 the computer bings, the call information displays on the screen,
7 gives me the basic information of address, what the call type is;
8 sometimes there is caller information, reporting information. And
9 then from there, that's where we status our, you know, en route,
10 on scene, clear, and whatnot.

11 And then also, to go along with that, over our main dispatch
12 channel, from that central communication center, somebody will
13 verbally dispatch the call as well.

14 Q. Okay. So in this case it was a 911 that --

15 A. It was a 911 call that went to our communication center and
16 then they dispatched us from there.

17 Q. And who monitors 911? Is it the police or totally different
18 entity?

19 A. So, I'm not sure how -- I know we have fire department call
20 takers and we have police call takers. They're all in the same
21 building. I'm not sure whether that call went to the police side
22 first and then got sent to the fire side.

23 Do you know?

24 LT. OLIN: I'm unsure.

25 MR. FABRIZIO: I don't know. I can't give you specifics on

1 that one.

2 BY MR. CHHATRE:

3 Q. Okay. So now, do you know on that call did the person
4 identify that he's from Apartment 304, 102, whatever the case may
5 be?

6 A. I don't remember.

7 Q. If you don't recall, can we look at the -- maybe can you get
8 that maybe transcript of that call and send it to us, or can we --

9 A. I won't have the ability to do that because once we submit
10 everything it goes to our records. I mean, I can look it up, but
11 that would have to go through a different chain of, different
12 chain of command really.

13 LT. OLIN: William Olin. I can get that for you, Ravi.

14 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

15 LT. OLIN: I think -- I've provided you some but I might have
16 provided it to Rachael, but she has --

17 MR. CHHATRE: She has it? Okay.

18 LT. OLIN: -- she has the CAD.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. I'll check with her.

20 LT. OLIN: And I can get you another -- I can send you
21 another copy, so --

22 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

23 LT. OLIN: Yeah.

24 MR. CHHATRE: That will be great.

25 MR. FABRIZIO: Also, we -- I think we sent three -- there

1 should be four statements, one from myself and then each crew
2 member as well.

3 LT. OLIN: Yep.

4 MR. FABRIZIO: Sort of expanding out the -- so we can get
5 those to you as well.

6 BY MR. CHHATRE:

7 Q. But you don't recall any particular apartment number that
8 called, just -- I mean, it's some time ago, so --

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And usually when we have a specific apartment number it's
12 noted on our MBC, and communications or our dispatch center will
13 usually say reported in Apartment 2-0-whatever. And that's
14 usually where -- if that's where it's reported, that's where we
15 start with our investigation and work out from there.

16 But if I remember correctly -- excuse me -- if I remember
17 correctly, I believe it was just a general odor in the building.
18 It wasn't specific.

19 Q. A rough sketch we have, make sure you guys are reasonably
20 okay -- this is 8703.

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. 8701.

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. Am I correct so far?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. I think the entrance was somewhere, I think, in the middle
2 or it could be on the one side.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, it's in the middle.

4 MR. FABRIZIO: So the entryway is --

5 MR. CHHATRE: Was in middle? Okay.

6 MR. FABRIZIO: -- is in the center.

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. So this is the entrance here.

9 A. Because you have two apartments on either side that have
10 entryways from the hallway and also have a terrace level or patio
11 entry.

12 Q. Yeah. Right. Okay. And the stair goes kind of down, I
13 guess.

14 A. So when you walk in, it's a, it's -- if I can --

15 Q. Sure.

16 A. So when you walk in through the front door, you have a
17 landing here that comes down like this and then you have
18 apartments off of that. And then here you have stairs that go
19 down.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. And then on this side, you'd have stairs that go up. If that
22 makes sense.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So it's a hallway or walkway on the left, stairs down and
25 stairs up.

1 Q. Okay.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chase, why don't you put on there the
3 -- your alpha, bravo -- the designations of sides --

4 MR. FABRIZIO: Okay.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- just so when -- he can --

6 MR. FABRIZIO: So we, in the fire department, we call the
7 front side or the address side, side alpha. This would be side
8 bravo; this would be Charlie and this would be delta.

9 BY MR. CHHATRE:

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So when we -- when I say side alpha, this is what I'm
12 referring to. We made entry through that door there. When we
13 park on the alpha-delta corner, which meant we parked the rig down
14 here.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And we typically don't park in front of the building in case
17 if there is an issue --

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. -- we're not taking out the rig and the personnel that's sort
20 of standby there.

21 Q. Right. Okay. So in this case, you went upstairs, you went
22 everywhere and --

23 A. We covered the whole, the whole building. We went from the
24 very top to the very bottom. And the doors that we could not --
25 the apartments that we could not gain entry into because nobody

1 answered, we gapped the door with our -- with my metal wedge and,
2 you know, monitored for 5 or 10 seconds.

3 Q. With the meter going in?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. The probe going in and --

6 A. Right. So the meter has a pump on it and at the end of it is
7 an intake, you know, sort of nipple. So what we'll do is we'll
8 gap the door and we'll take the meter and hold it up there. And
9 when we have a gas leak in -- I've had very good success in the
10 past of when we have gas leaks, if there's anything that is
11 evident, our meter in a certain -- it'll read parts per million.
12 We can switch it to a different display. And majority of the time
13 that will kick up and we're able to find the source apartment.

14 Q. And you did say that the person who was taking the readings
15 did calibrate the meter before you --

16 A. Before we went in, zeroed the meter, yes.

17 Q. Right. Okay. Now the gas meters and the regulator area is
18 in here. There were no -- in the basement?

19 A. Correct. This is what -- so what we do as well, in terms of
20 for orientation purposes. So alpha, bravo, Charlie, delta. We
21 will cross-section the building and we'll call this alpha
22 quadrant, the bravo quadrant, Charlie quadrant, delta quadrant.
23 And we call the center portion the echo quadrant.

24 So the laundry room, meter room and all that is located in
25 the alpha quadrant, which, if I remember correctly, is on the

1 alpha-bravo corner of the building.

2 Q. Right. Okay. So you guys did go inside or --

3 A. We did not because the door was locked. So we gapped the top
4 of the door and metered the void space. They -- as I said, they
5 changed the keys on us. There was nothing indicating to us that
6 there -- for us to go through and start forcing doors.

7 There have been times we've run gas leaks and you smell
8 something. It's like, okay, well, we're just -- our keys don't
9 work; we're going to have to start forcing doors. There was
10 nothing here that indicated to us that we needed to go through and
11 start popping doors.

12 Q. And roughly what time was it when you responded? I mean,
13 morning, afternoon? I mean --

14 A. I -- it was in the evening time because I remember it was
15 dark. I mean, it wasn't dark dark. It was probably dusk. But
16 again, if it was summertime, that could've been 8, 9:00.

17 Q. Okay. So nobody -- the office was closed, is what you're
18 saying?

19 A. Yes, yes.

20 Q. Okay. The office was closed. Now do you guys go outside the
21 building and look at the perimeter for the gas odor?

22 A. I personally did not. My wagon driver did a lap for me and
23 he came back and said that he went around 8701 and -03, kind of
24 did a lap around the whole thing, and he didn't smell anything or
25 noted -- or note or hear anything. Talked to a couple residents

1 that were outside in the general courtyards and they denied, you
2 know, smelling anything.

3 Q. Smelling anything.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. The vent is somewhere in here, in this --

6 A. I'm sorry?

7 Q. The gas vent.

8 A. So each one of these apartments have window wells on the
9 front. And those window wells, usually at the laundry rooms --
10 most of them have plywood that's been put up over the windows.
11 And around those window wells is where your gas vent tubes come
12 out and there's also usually a ventilation fan for, you know, the
13 laundry room to help circulate air.

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. You know, so -- so that would have been right in this area
16 here.

17 Q. And no odor --

18 A. Nothing there.

19 Q. Yeah. No meter readings, no --

20 A. Nothing.

21 Q. Okay. So roughly how much time do you think you guys spent
22 there? Half an hour or --

23 A. No. I would say probably 10 to 15 minutes.

24 Q. Okay. And since then -- I mean, we can always look at the
25 records. Since then until explosion, there were no other odor

1 calls that you had to respond to, or --

2 A. I mean --

3 Q. As far as you --

4 A. In terms of -- I mean, we did -- that area, that specific
5 building, me personally, I can't -- I don't remember. I do know
6 that complex we run, you know, gas leaks not on a -- on every
7 shift, but on a frequent basis.

8 Q. This whole area?

9 A. That whole complex itself as a whole.

10 Q. Okay. And do you guys ever see, if you remember -- I mean,
11 there are a lot odor calls. Do you guys ever see the odor -- can
12 you identify the source on these odor calls, or everything was
13 negative just like this time?

14 A. On ones in the past?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Oh, I can't remember. I mean, it's been -- you know, I've
17 been assigned to this station for 3, 3½ years now. I can't think
18 of -- I believe there were calls in the past where we've gone in
19 and we've turned off -- we've had like a malfunctioning -- because
20 they're gas dryers, having a malfunctioning dryer and isolating
21 the gas to that.

22 I do not remember -- I'm not saying it didn't happen, but I
23 don't remember off the top of my head if we had an issue with any
24 type of gas service itself in terms of the meters or regulators or
25 anything like that.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I believe we've had some CO calls in the past, carbon
3 monoxide, related to the hot water heaters that are in the same
4 room, but I can't remember any specifics about any gas issues.

5 MR. CHHATRE: All right. That's all for me.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have nothing.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

8 BY LT. OLIN:

9 Q. Hey, Chase, Bill Olin. Do you recall who had the meter that
10 day? Just for the sake of --

11 A. If I remember correctly --

12 Q. Who was riding the line?

13 A. -- it was Firefighter Chris Kain. And I can't remember
14 whether he had the meter the whole time or whether he may have
15 passed it off to Aaron Branch.

16 Q. Okay. And Kain's here today, right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. All right.

19 A. Yes.

20 BY MR. PRICE:

21 Q. Good morning.

22 A. Morning.

23 Q. Steve Price with Washington Gas. Do you remember what day of
24 the week this was?

25 A. I do not.

1 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with the complex generally?

2 A. Very well. We spend a lot of time -- you know, I take it as
3 we need to know our buildings where we're responding and whatnot.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. So that complex, just because of the way that some of those
6 buildings are set up, they're unique to us in terms of trying to
7 get apparatus positioned and whatnot. Anytime we have somebody
8 new assigned to the station, that's one of our complexes that we
9 go down and stretch lines and help throw ladders and just sort of
10 deal with some of the challenges that we may face just because of
11 the way the buildings are positioned and our access for our fire
12 trucks.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I'm a big believer of knowing the buildings, you know,
15 because if you know the building, at 2:00 in the morning it's
16 going to make your job that much easier to mitigate whatever
17 incident you're faced with. So I spend a lot of time walking
18 around that complex and in those buildings and the associated
19 challenges with them.

20 Q. So you'd also be familiar generally with the community and
21 its activity around the building. And what I'm getting at is, so
22 this is 8 or 9:00 at night.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Can you describe how active it is with the people, residents
25 in around the building?

1 A. It changes, obviously, with the weather. And then it also
2 changes with, you know, the seasons and then what night of the
3 week it is. Generally in the summertime, usually from, I would
4 say, 5, 6:00 up till, you know, 10:00 at night, you'll see a fair
5 amount of people walking through, either sitting on their
6 balconies or their front porches, hanging out in the common areas.
7 When the weather's cold, not so much. Weekends, you know, you see
8 a lot of kids running around and whatnot. And then holidays -- we
9 worked Christmas this year and we ran a call down there Christmas
10 night at probably 10, 11:00, and there were, I don't know,
11 probably 30 people running around in the common areas. So --

12 Q. Okay. So that evening you don't recall being directed to a
13 specific apartment in 8701?

14 A. No. The one gentleman that did approach us, I believe he was
15 the one who said he called, said that he smelled gas in the area
16 of the mailboxes.

17 Q. So where -- can --

18 MR. PRICE: Ravi, do you mind if we use this?

19 MR. CHHATRE: No, no. Sure. Yeah.

20 BY MR. PRICE:

21 Q. Where was the -- show me where the mailbox is located.

22 A. So when you walk in the front door, you walk in -- so let's
23 say this is the front door here. You have a hallway or a walkway
24 here, and then you have stairs that go down.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. So the mailboxes, if I remember correctly, were located on
2 this wall here.

3 Q. Right on the main landing as you walk in?

4 A. Right on the main landing. Right.

5 Q. Okay. And did that gentleman, if you recall, tell you where
6 he resided, which -- if he even resided there?

7 A. No. I don't recall.

8 Q. You also made reference to, I thought -- I thought it was a
9 couple adults, people who were outside --

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. -- sitting on --

12 A. Which would have been this apartment. I want to say that
13 would have been Apartment 101. Because the lower apartments carry
14 single digits or it would be two digits, which would be Apartment
15 11 and 12, if I remember correctly.

16 Q. Right.

17 A. And I believe this would be Apartment 101. And the -- I
18 believe this was the apartment. I want to say maybe three or four
19 people sitting out on their front porch or patio area.

20 Q. Okay. And I don't recall whether -- I don't recall the
21 actual schemes or schematics of the apartments as constructed.
22 Did each of those have outside little patios --

23 A. No. Just the --

24 Q. -- on the front?

25 A. All the apartments in that -- the front two apartments here

1 have the patio. And then on the Charlie side, the lower side,
2 there's an entry from the exterior. So Apartments 11 and 12 have
3 a patio as well.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Does that make sense?

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. So it's two stories in the front and three stories in the
8 rear.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. They'll have patios on their back side. And then the front
11 two apartments have exterior entrances and interior entrances. So
12 the interior apartments on the upper floors do not have patios,
13 but they do have balconies.

14 Q. Okay. So the folks that you talked to outside, right out --
15 somewhere in the front of Apartment 101 --

16 A. Off to the left. Right.

17 Q. Yeah, but in front of 8701 --

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. -- not in front of 8703?

20 A. Correct. Because 8703 is offset, and the entryways between
21 those two apartments is, you know, probably 50 feet or so.

22 Q. Okay. And obviously they didn't smell any odor of gas?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And you were able to either get into each apartment in the
25 building or wedge the door --

1 A. Gap the door and monitor.

2 Q. -- and check it with your combustible gas indicator?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Do you recall any specifics about the meter room down in the
5 terrace, the meter room door? Was it -- did it present any
6 difficulty in terms of wedging it or getting access to --

7 A. No. Most of those -- just about all those doors in there are
8 very easy to gap. If I -- I can't speak specifically for that
9 specific door. I do know that there are several doors in that
10 complex that go into the meter/laundry room that have dents and
11 marks on there from us as the fire department in the past going in
12 and forcing where, you know, there's been an odor or whatnot. But
13 I don't remember the specifics of that door itself.

14 Q. Your combustible gas indicator, how sensitive is it in terms
15 of what will it pick up in terms of gas readings? Do you know?

16 A. In terms of -- so it will tell us our percentage of LEL. And
17 that's designed to alarm at 10 percent of the LEL, and it's
18 calibrated or based off of methane. In the past it used to be
19 pentane but now it's a 1:1 reading. We have another field that we
20 can go to that will read parts per million and, if I remember
21 correctly, it increases in terms of 50; so 100, 150, 200, and so
22 on.

23 And then that meter also, you know, when we calibrate it, it
24 has a data log in there that will record the previous sort of
25 readings and peaks and whatnot, and I believe at timestamps like

1 every 15 seconds or something like that.

2 Q. You indicated four of -- yourself and three others provided
3 statements regarding that particular call. And I heard Chris Kain
4 was one.

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. You were one. Who were the other two?

7 A. Master Firefighter Charlie Appleby, who was the driver, and
8 firefighter/paramedic Aaron Branch.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Can you spell their names, spell the names for
10 the transcriber?

11 MR. FABRIZIO: Aaron Branch is A-a-r-o-n, B-r-a-n-c-h. Chris
12 Kain is common spelling for the first name; last name K-a-i-n.
13 Charlie Appleby is the common spelling; last name A-p-p-l-e-b-y.
14 I usually have to write it down and see it spelled out.

15 BY MR. PRICE:

16 Q. You also described the window out of the meter room facing
17 onto the A-side of the building, I guess would be correct
18 statement there. But do you recall if the cardboard itself is
19 vented, is like a cheese board as opposed to a solid?

20 A. So for that specific apartment, I don't know. I do know that
21 there are several apartment buildings in that complex that have --
22 it's plywood with drilled holes in it.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you said plywood before, did you
24 not?

25 MR. FABRIZIO: Yes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not cardboard?

2 MR. PRICE: Right. Did I say cardboard?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, you said -- sorry.

4 MR. PRICE: I meant plywood.

5 MR. FABRIZIO: Okay.

6 MR. PRICE: Thanks. That's all I have for now.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. FABRIZIO: Um-hum.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Kelly.

10 BY MR. EMEABA:

11 Q. Good morning.

12 A. Good morning.

13 Q. This is Kalu Kelly Emeaba. I just have follow-up questions.
14 Do your office document all your emergency call response? Do you
15 document them anytime you get a call?

16 A. Yes. Anytime we respond for a -- we get dispatched on an
17 emergency or even something that's considered a non-emergency,
18 which would be like a service call, somebody fell and just needs
19 help getting back up. Anytime an incident number is created and a
20 call is -- or a piece of apparatus or a unit is dispatched on a
21 call, then we come back and we fill out a report on a computer
22 that we sort of generically list our actions, what we found, what
23 we did. And, you know, it's all -- like our times are recorded
24 from the time that we hit the button saying we're en route, we're
25 on scene, we clear and come back to the station.

1 Q. Yeah, that leads to my second question. I wanted to ask you
2 if when you come back from your response if you actually close
3 out?

4 A. Yes, yes.

5 Q. Okay. Well, some of the testimony you made here with respect
6 to your interaction with the personnel at the -- you know, the
7 resident --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. -- whom you spoke with and the fact that your paramedic did
10 smell something but they don't know what it was and you were still
11 unable to detect gas with your meter, will it be part of what you
12 document in your close-out document?

13 A. Yes and no. So there are times where you run calls where
14 there wasn't a whole -- you know, you investigate it and, you
15 know, I may note in my report dispatched for an odor of gas,
16 monitored, nothing found, units were in service, and I may not
17 list all of the fine details. If we run a call where there was
18 some sort of -- whether it was a -- something was found and then
19 through that process of finding it, there were some complexities
20 in terms of we had to force doors or we had to do something that
21 needed -- what I would feel needed to be documented and clearly
22 defined, then that would be put into the report.

23 You know, if we -- we've run gas leaks before and, you know,
24 we've had one, for instance, a couple weeks ago in an apartment
25 that the occupant reported an odor of gas. We walked through. We

1 had very small readings on our meter. I sent the crew, one of the
2 crew members to the floor below, gave him my wedge. He gapped the
3 door and found 400 parts per million at the doorway. So we went
4 in. We forced the door and we found that somebody had left the
5 stove on without the flame. So, you know, we ventilated the
6 apartment and I came back and documented that very clearly, of we
7 checked here, we forced the door here, this is what we found.

8 But as I said, some calls, if we go through and do an
9 investigation and don't find any emergency at that point,
10 sometimes -- probably a fault of my own, my reports aren't as
11 clearly defined or documented as they should be.

12 Q. Okay. Yeah, thank you. I mean, based on what you said, that
13 has my curiosity to know that your, both your emergency response,
14 your close-out --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. -- the documents are traceable, they are available. So we
17 can always find out the date --

18 A. Right.

19 Q. -- you actually went to that facility, correct? Thank you.

20 You did mention the (indiscernible) which is going to the
21 apartment and your crew went down to the basement area in order to
22 open up the meter/storage room and you weren't able to do it
23 because the key must have been changed out on your people. And
24 you mentioned going to a place -- door, something like that.
25 After you try your key and you could not walk in there --

1 A. Right.

2 Q. -- you, if you can, just to re-confirm what you said, what
3 did you do in order to try to assess that room?

4 A. That was where we had my metal wedge and the guys gapped the
5 door, created a gap between the door and the door frame, and were
6 able to put the meter up into the top corner of the void space
7 that we created.

8 Q. Okay. So you didn't make effort to seek for the key,
9 actually?

10 A. No. There was no -- I mean, there was nobody -- we went and
11 got our key that we have out of our Knox-Box. That key did not
12 work.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. After hours there are usually no maintenance personnel or
15 anybody there to give us access to those locked rooms.

16 Q. The Knox-Box is it in your truck or at that location?

17 A. So we have a key that stays on our fire truck and that key is
18 the master key for all those boxes in Montgomery County.

19 Businesses and residential multi-occupancies, and they're
20 actually even putting them on residential homes now, whoever the
21 owner or the manager is, if they elect to have a box put in,
22 that's their choice. So there are some businesses that don't have
23 them; there are some that do. And even the business owners don't
24 have access to that box. So when they install a box and they want
25 to put keys in or change the keys out, they have to call us and we

1 have to go down and unlock it for them, either install keys or
2 exchange keys out. But each -- whoever elects to have them will
3 have them mounted somewhere on the building. We try to explain to
4 them that they need to be close to the main entryway so when we
5 show up we can go up and get keys.

6 But for this apartment complex, not every apartment has a
7 Knox-Box key. There are only a few buildings themselves that we
8 have to -- you know, so if we run the middle of the complex, I may
9 have to go down to -- I think it's 8664, to grab a Knox-Box key
10 when I'm operating at 58. So --

11 Q. Okay. Thank you so much.

12 Going a little bit on your equipment, your gas detectors,
13 please, can you lead me through how do your crew get training on
14 the use?

15 A. So the initial training, there is a overview or a class --
16 I'm not sure how much in depth when they actually are in the fire
17 academy itself.

18 Q. Yes, sir.

19 A. Excuse me. Once they finish the fire academy and they get
20 assigned to a firehouse, they are considered a probationary
21 firefighter. Through their probationary process, they have a
22 skills check-off sheet that requires certain, you know, either
23 refresher training or expansive training on the meters. Or -- I'm
24 sorry -- on a bunch of different topics. One of those is going
25 over the meters, explaining all the different fields, the four

1 different gases that the meter reads, what the readings mean, when
2 they alarm, when there's a trouble or an issue with the meter.
3 And we make sure that they're proficient at that point with it and
4 then carry on.

5 If we have somebody that gets detailed into or -- sorry --
6 assigned to the firehouse that did not do their probationary time
7 here, we sort of take everybody through, you know, sort of see
8 where they are. So in the morning when -- their first tour here
9 in the morning that they arrive in the engine or the truck, myself
10 or maybe my driver will ask them, hey, tell me about this meter.
11 And see where they are. And if they don't know -- if they're not
12 comfortable or familiar with the meter, then we'll sit down and
13 walk through everything with them.

14 On top of that, there is also a DVD, you know, that has like
15 a PowerPoint on there, that will take you through and walk you
16 through that. And then through our annual re-certs that we have
17 to do annually, there is a small refresher, if you will, in there
18 just talking about gas readings and oxygen levels and how the
19 meter -- in terms of, you know, reading the LEL, what does that
20 mean, how much oxygen has to be present for that meter or that
21 sensor to work correctly and whatnot. So --

22 Q. Thank you for that explanation.

23 LT. OLIN: And that's annual.

24 MR. FABRIZIO: That's annual.

25 LT. OLIN: That is an annual, just --

1 MR. FABRIZIO: Yes.

2 BY MR. EMEABA:

3 Q. Okay. Still in that part, have you had a situation where one
4 of your firefighters or crew members had to be re-trained in the
5 use of that CGS or the gas detector?

6 A. Not my time here at 16, no. When I was at -- when I was
7 truck driver and I was working Station 25, I remember we had
8 somebody that was newly assigned to the shift and he had just come
9 off probation, and he brought the gas meter out of the
10 compartment, he turned it on, and as soon as it came on he turned
11 it off and he put it back. I said, hey, bring it back out and
12 let's talk about this. And we started talking and realizing that
13 he, for whatever reason, didn't have the basic knowledge of the
14 meter. So we went through and worked a couple tours and even, you
15 know, had guys quizzing him for the next couple of tours after
16 that to make sure that he was squared away with it.

17 But in terms of our personnel here in 16, no. Everbody's
18 been on point.

19 Q. Okay. Still on training, do this station -- I mean, your
20 crew members on this station in particular, have you received any
21 training both in the use of gas detector and any other -- from the
22 gas company like Washington Gas? Have you received any form of
23 training from them?

24 A. No, not that I can -- not that I remember.

25 Q. And at least -- you've been here for 3 years, correct?

1 A. Three, 3½ years, yes.

2 Q. And do you know anything in the area of public awareness
3 program that your station or a station like this, firefighter, can
4 actually receive from the gas company?

5 A. I do know that there have been other stations that have gone
6 down to -- is it the gas, the gas pipeline school?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pipetown.

8 MR. FABRIZIO: Pipetown USA or whatever --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: At Springfield.

10 MR. FABRIZIO: In Virginia. I know a couple of -- out of
11 this battalion and I think a couple other shifts, not my shift
12 specifically, have been down to the Pipetown training.

13 BY MR. EMEABA:

14 Q. Okay. But have you been there yourself?

15 A. I have not, no.

16 Q. By chance, do you people receive anything like pipeline maps
17 in this area from the gas company?

18 A. No.

19 Q. All right. The other thing I wanted to find out -- you
20 mentioned in your response the fact that the Flower Branch
21 Apartment, your crew or your station have responded to a lot of
22 gas odor calls from them.

23 A. Yeah. I mean, I -- again, a lot is all subjective. I mean,
24 we're there on a --

25 Q. Frequent.

1 A. We go on a frequent basis.

2 Q. Yeah. How --

3 A. And then especially after the incident, you know, we were
4 there a few times a day. So --

5 Q. Okay. But before the incident, can you just --

6 A. Probably for me, just talking about our shift, probably once,
7 maybe twice a month.

8 MR. EMEABA: All right. Thank you. That's it at this time.

9 Go back to --

10 MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre, NTSB.

11 BY MR. CHHATRE:

12 Q. A couple of questions. What is your shift?

13 A. For my shift? I'm sorry?

14 Q. What is your -- what are your shift hours? Is it --

15 A. Oh, we work 24 hours, from 07 to 07.

16 Q. Okay. Is this report that you file, is that something you
17 generate getting a call or after you come back? Or you use a
18 different report when you come back?

19 A. So this is -- yeah, this is the sort of, I guess, the summary
20 of the incident history, which would be generated from the -- our
21 communications center or our computed-aided dispatch system. So
22 this is pretty much when a call goes out, this is the information
23 that we would receive.

24 Q. Okay. So that you see on your computer?

25 A. This is what shows up on my computer screen.

1 Q. Right. Okay.

2 A. This information is obviously from, you know -- and I don't
3 know what this stands for, but this is when it was dispatched.
4 This is when we were en route. I'm not sure what these mean.
5 That's us on scene. That's us clearing. That's us available in
6 quarters. And when we clear, that's when obviously it closes the
7 incident out.

8 Q. Yeah, actually, that's why I was showing this. I was trying
9 to understand all this. I don't understand some of this stuff,
10 so --

11 A. So this -- so these are the people assigned, their positions
12 up in --

13 Q. Right.

14 A. -- communications, who's working what (indiscernible). But,
15 again, the EVA -- this, I'm not sure what that means. I assume
16 that means when they plug it in. I don't know, I don't know what
17 these other things mean here.

18 Q. Right. But these are -- I mean, you follow these, these are
19 times, right?

20 A. Yeah. So dispatch -- DSP is dispatch.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. ENR is en route.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Something obviously that they did here. I'm not sure what
25 that means. On scene.

1 Q. You are still on scene.

2 A. Available on radio. Available in quarters. And when the
3 call was -- when it finally closes out.

4 Q. Okay, okay. Your memory is good. It's matching, 9:00. So
5 if you --

6 A. I'm sorry?

7 Q. Your memory was good. It's 9:00, is apparently when the call
8 came in. 10:00 is --

9 A. So -- 10:00.

10 Q. 10:00?

11 A. Yeah, 2216, which would be 10:00.

12 Q. 10:00.

13 A. So, yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ravi, can I -- when you're done, can I
16 (indiscernible) --

17 MR. CHHATRE: Sure, sure. Yeah. You can come on this side
18 if you want to.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. Okay.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Sure.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I hate to look over your shoulder,
22 but --

23 MR. CHHATRE: No, no, no. Do, please do.

24 MR. FABRIZIO: No, go ahead. Do what you need to do.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. So it looks like the person gave the name. It's the same
3 person I see who called the second time, Adrian?

4 A. Yes.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: His name is on there. Is it -- yes,
6 it is the same one.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. So person person.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

9 MR. FABRIZIO: Really? Mr. Boye?

10 MR. CHHATRE: Yep.

11 BY MR. CHHATRE:

12 Q. And you said the mailboxes were as you enter --

13 A. When you --

14 Q. -- the front door on the left-hand side? Right-hand side?

15 A. On the left-hand side.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So the walkway is only, you know, maybe 5 feet wide.

18 Q. So you walk in, mailbox are there, the staircase --

19 A. Yeah. I open up the front door and literally when you walk
20 through the front door, the metal mailboxes --

21 Q. Right there.

22 A. -- for all the apartments are right there.

23 Q. And then the staircase goes down.

24 A. So if I'm looking at the hallway and this is the wall with
25 the mailboxes, right here is a railing post and the stairs that go

1 down --

2 Q. Go down.

3 A. -- to the terrace level.

4 Q. Yeah. Okay.

5 A. Then I walk down the hallway. When I get to the end of that,
6 there is a return set of stairs going up.

7 Q. Now just, usually your wedge that you use, where do you --

8 A. I'm sorry?

9 Q. Sorry. The wedge you said you use to pop open the door or
10 make a space for your probe --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- how do you use that? I mean, I'm just curious as to
13 whether --

14 A. I can go -- it's upstairs in my gear. I can bring it out and
15 show you if you -- if that helps you.

16 Q. I'm just curious about whether it's a space enough, is what
17 my --

18 A. Yeah. No, that's fine.

19 (Off the record.)

20 (On the record.)

21 MR. FABRIZIO: So these are the two aluminum wedges that I
22 carry in my gear with me. I use them for chocking doors. Mainly
23 the metal ones we use for forceful entry. This will allow me to
24 flex the door, get a gap, and I can put my tools in and the guys
25 can work the door. As you can see, this is one that I primarily

1 use is -- it's been chewed.

2 So what we'll do, on an inward swinging door, is we'll put it
3 in the corner, between the door and the jamb and give it a little
4 bit of a push. Sometimes you can just -- if the door flexes
5 enough, you can wiggle it back and forth. And once we get it in
6 there, just hit the back side of it. And that will gap out the
7 top of the door about that much distance.

8 BY MR. CHHATRE:

9 Q. On the top?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Oh, wow.

12 A. Because if I go -- if I go here, where it the lock mechanism
13 is, obviously, the door's not going to flex as much. When I come
14 up top, I can put my wedge in there -- and I don't want to tear up
15 the paint. I can flex this back and forth and then push this in a
16 gap, it'll actually push the top of the door out. And that will
17 allow --

18 Q. Enough to stick your probe in.

19 A. So then we take the top of the meter and put it up at the
20 door. You know we obviously do the top side because it's
21 obviously -- you know, most of our stuff we're doing with natural
22 gas, that's where we try to get our readings from. So --

23 Garden apartments, normally -- in the Flower Branch
24 Apartments --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible)

1 MR. FABRIZIO: It really is. I mean, something as simple as
2 like this makes life very, very easy. The only problem is it
3 weighs down your coat a little bit.

4 Majority of the apartments, not just necessarily Flower
5 Branch, but garden apartments or even in the multi-occupancies,
6 the metal doors and metal frames, I mean, are -- you can go up and
7 push on the top of them and flex the door very easily. So --

8 So usually for us, when we're doing our investigations, it's
9 nothing to take one of these and put them in there. And sometimes
10 I'll take both of them and pop them up and create a bigger gap if
11 we need to. So --

12 BY MR. CHHATRE:

13 Q. The last calls that came from Flower Branch Apartments, is
14 there any easy way to see how many of those in the last year or
15 something?

16 A. That would have to be -- that would have to be something that
17 would be done, I think, through our communications. For --

18 MR. CHHATRE: Have you given that already?

19 LT. OLIN: Is this --

20 MR. CHHATRE: Bill?

21 LT. OLIN: Bill Olin, Montgomery County. Is this like a
22 history of the --

23 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. For the last year or so --

24 MR. FABRIZIO: For that, for that --

25 LT. OLIN: From the department, we can probably get someone

1 to do a report for a geographic area. So it would be not -- which
2 would -- yeah, like the Flower Branch.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Right.

4 LT. OLIN: And she could do like a history of that area. I
5 mean, it's like fire -- whatever, fire reporting area or
6 something. And it's just a, you know, a geographic area on a map.
7 It's like --

8 MR. CHHATRE: I just want to reduce the work by -- so getting
9 that area with too many apartment buildings. Just the Flower --

10 MR. FABRIZIO: Because we would --

11 LT. OLIN: She could query a odor of gas leak or odor calls
12 and run a report and it would come up.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Can you -- can we do that?

14 LT. OLIN: Um-hum.

15 MR. CHHATRE: If it's not too much work, just to find out how
16 many came from this apartment building. And maybe we can go a
17 year or two, whatever works.

18 LT. OLIN: Okay.

19 MR. CHHATRE: I mean, especially the odor calls is the main
20 interest.

21 LT. OLIN: Yeah.

22 MR. CHHATRE: And, you know, what the findings are. Like
23 once -- if we find like 10 reports, then maybe we can find out
24 what the findings were.

25 LT. OLIN: Okay.

1 MR. CHHATRE: And if all the findings are negative, then it's
2 helpful. If all the findings are positive, it's helpful.

3 LT. OLIN: Okay.

4 MR. CHHATRE: Like what, you know, what the outcome is. I
5 mean --

6 LT. OLIN: Okay. So what's -- the query will be the 911
7 calls, and then we'll go back -- we'd have to go back and
8 basically look at the report and see what the like --

9 MR. CHHATRE: I mean, if you have search field, for example,
10 at the Flower Branch Apartments.

11 LT. OLIN: Okay. Yeah.

12 MR. CHHATRE: That minimizes the manual part of the effort.
13 And then only 10 pops up --

14 LT. OLIN: Right. It's those 10 that -- those 10 reports.

15 MR. CHHATRE: -- then manually we can look then and --

16 LT. OLIN: Yes. I understand. Right.

17 MR. CHHATRE: -- and, you know, find out.

18 BY MR. CHHATRE:

19 Q. But you do have to enter something when you come back --

20 A. Yes, yes.

21 Q. -- basically. And then somebody else enters -- like, for
22 example, in this case, whatever you guys did, that information is
23 stored someplace or -- let's just say you were to find odor in one
24 of the apartments.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. Would that show up on this one here?

2 A. Not on this. So this is a, so this is -- and don't quote me
3 on this as being exact, but this, I believe, is just the CAD unit
4 history or call history in terms of just the information, the
5 times. Then --

6 Q. Who went to what location kind of deal?

7 A. Right. That -- somebody called 911, they create an incident
8 number, who created the call, when it was dispatched, when we went
9 en route.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. All that kind of stuff. Then there's a -- when we come back
12 there is a -- we call it a fire app. We enter in our information
13 of who was on the call, what equipment was used, what we did, what
14 we found, and then from there.

15 Q. Okay. That's a different report?

16 A. Yes.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. You know, if we find -- Bill, if we find
18 gas odor calls, let's just say five, if we can get -- I don't
19 know, what do you call --

20 MR. FABRIZIO: The fire app reports?

21 LT. OLIN: That's what I -- I've got that. That's what I
22 sort of gathered from your first -- so we're going to query the
23 911 calls for a geographic area --

24 MR. CHHATRE: Right.

25 LT. OLIN: -- the Flower Branch. We find the -- and she's

1 going to put odor of gas or gas leak.

2 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

3 LT. OLIN: We'll do like --

4 MR. CHHATRE: Some key words like that.

5 LT. OLIN: Yes. Those are going to pop up, propagate, and
6 then, you know, we'll go through the fire -- we'll get the fire
7 app, corresponding fire app reports.

8 MR. CHHATRE: And find -- yeah, that will helpful just to --

9 LT. OLIN: Yep.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Great. Otherwise, I have no more
11 questions. Very informative, very educational. This is the first
12 time I saw it. I always was worried that in case we call the fire
13 department, are they going to break my door and --

14 MR. FABRIZIO: Oh, there -- trust me. There have been -- I
15 think if you go back and look at my history, there have been times
16 when we --

17 LT. OLIN: Firemen are good at breaking stuff.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Holes in the roof.

19 MR. FABRIZIO: Exactly. I've definitely had my fair share of
20 doors, where people have called -- you know, I've gotten calls
21 from the chief, you want to explain this one? Yeah, well --

22 MR. CHHATRE: Any follow-up questions?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, I'm good.

24 LT. OLIN: Bill Olin, Montgomery County. Not so much a
25 question, just from my experience, as well, I mean, the Knox-Box

1 keys, it's like the people -- like as Chase said, you need to call
2 us to get the keys put in. But it seems like more times than not,
3 you know, when they change the keys out, it's sort of like out of
4 sight, out of mind, and you'll get there and you find the old
5 original keys even though they've changed. So I just -- you know,
6 it's very common to --

7 MR. FABRIZIO: Right. I mean, we just went through 11, 11
8 University West, where they said they had all new keys. Well, the
9 maintenance guy cut them himself. So before we put them in the
10 Knox-Box we said, well, let's walk around and take a look. Well,
11 80 percent of the keys didn't work. So we had to give them back
12 to him and say, here you go; try again. So --

13 MR. CHHATRE: I guess like any other duplicate keys, you
14 know --

15 MR. FABRIZIO: Right.

16 MR. PRICE: Just a couple of questions on a point you brought
17 up --

18 MR. CHHATRE: Identify --

19 MR. PRICE: Sorry. Steve Price, Washington Gas.

20 BY MR. PRICE:

21 Q. One, I just took a quick look, and the 25th of July, which is
22 showing in the report, was a Monday night.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. So I had asked questions before about that.

25 And secondly, Kelly's questions regarding training with

1 Washington Gas, I just wanted to point out that in the -- Rick
2 Downs' team in ESF, emergency response group, we provided all the
3 information about our training processes with Montgomery County.
4 So that's all available in that other team's report.

5 This is implicit, I think, from what I heard you describe on
6 your findings there. But as a result of your investigation that
7 evening on the 25th, you did not report anything directly to
8 Washington Gas for further assistance with any kind of a gas --

9 A. No, I did not.

10 Q. Okay. Would there be circumstances under which the fire
11 department would get Washington Gas involved if -- depending upon
12 your findings?

13 A. Oh, yes. Yes. I mean, there have been times in the past
14 where I've called for Washington Gas. It -- I can't give you an
15 exact answer and say, well, this, this. Because each call is
16 different. Each one presents itself differently. Circumstances
17 change. If there is an uncontrolled gas leak, then yes, we'll
18 call for Washington Gas. If there is a issue with a meter or a
19 service line that once we've shut off, they're still -- that even
20 though the gas has stopped flowing, but if somebody turned the gas
21 back on there would be an issue, we'll call for Washington Gas.

22 We, I would say -- I don't know, 2 years ago we had a house
23 down on Dearborn, right down the street, that somebody had broken
24 into and was stealing the piping out and pulled the line off the
25 gas meter. We pulled up and, you know, we had 50 percent in the

1 house and the gas meter was inside. So, yeah, we called
2 Washington Gas to come out and, you know, dig up the front yard
3 and shut it down and then, you know, we mitigated it from there.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But there are definitely times that we have called for
6 Washington Gas. This is one of those incidences where we walked
7 through and there are times that -- you know, we explain to people
8 that not saying that you didn't have a gas issue before; we're
9 here now and we don't smell anything. If anything, you know,
10 further happens, you know, by all means call us back, call the gas
11 company.

12 Q. Right. How do you know how to contact Washington Gas if you
13 need to?

14 A. How do I know?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Or how do it or --

17 Q. What -- yeah, how do you do it?

18 A. I call our communications on our portable radio and say, hey,
19 start me Washington Gas for this. There are times that --
20 depending on what the incident is, there are times that we'll stay
21 there and wait for Washington Gas. There are times that we have
22 mitigated the problem, there is no emergency, but before anything
23 else happens with the system, obviously, Washington Gas needs to
24 come out and assess it or fix it or whatever. And we'll, you
25 know, leave it and then just have the Washington Gas rep show up

1 and do what they need to do.

2 Q. Okay. The report that you were showed in this interview
3 shows that the person who called this in by the name of Adrian was
4 a person who's been part -- who's known to this investigation.
5 Let's just put it that way.

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Do you recall meeting the person who reported that and
8 speaking to him?

9 A. I don't know -- the person I spoke with in the hallway at the
10 mailboxes, I don't know if that was him or not. I do remember
11 having a brief discussion with him. And I do remember -- and I
12 don't remember the specifics. I do remember that a couple other
13 of the crew members, and I don't know which one, overheard some
14 conversation with him. Whether that was the calling party or not,
15 I don't know.

16 Q. Okay. Can you describe him at all?

17 A. Couldn't even take a wild guess.

18 Q. Race or age or --

19 A. A black male. Age, I couldn't even guess.

20 Q. Okay. And nothing about what he presented to you seemed
21 peculiar or unusual or anything like that, that stands out in your
22 mind?

23 A. No, usually -- there weren't any trigger words or anything
24 like that. Usually you hear when you're talking to somebody and
25 they give you something specific or they give you some information

1 to help formulate your investigation process. There was nothing
2 that I remember or that I recall that was of great detail or that
3 would steer my investigation one way or the other.

4 Q. Okay. We're going to hopefully get records of any previous
5 calls from any of the residents in and around Flower Branch, but
6 on any of the previous calls that you were on, do you recall
7 having to call Washington Gas to report a need for assistance?

8 A. I can't remember.

9 Q. Were you aware that there are off-duty police officers that
10 are hired by the management company there that are -- that come on
11 duty some point in the evenings?

12 A. I can't put the time on whether it was before or after the
13 incident. I do know that we have run calls there before and there
14 -- whether they were private security or whether they were off-
15 duty police officers, I don't know. And again, I can't remember
16 if that was before or after the incident.

17 Q. Where you've actually engaged with them on-site? Or just --

18 A. I can't remember any specific engagements or interactions. I
19 mean, I can't think of anything off the top of my head.

20 Q. And you didn't describe any engagement with them that night
21 if like --

22 A. No.

23 Q. I guess the results of your investigation didn't seem require
24 any further investigation? I'll put it that way.

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I'm, yeah, almost certain we didn't have any security
3 personnel that were off-duty police officers or anything like
4 that, or anybody that identified themselves as such.

5 Q. Okay. Thank you very much, Lieutenant.

6 A. Yup.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. If not --

8 MR. FABRIZIO: That's it?

9 MR. CHHATRE: -- thank you so much for your time.

10 MR. FABRIZIO: All righty.

11 MR. CHHATRE: I appreciate --

12 MR. FABRIZIO: Not a problem.

13 MR. CHHATRE: -- taking some time off from your work here.
14 Off the record.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: THE EXPLOSION OF APARTMENT
BUILDING 8701 OF FLOWER BRANCH
APARTMENTS IN SILVER SPRING,
MARYLAND ON AUGUST 10, 2016
Interview of Chase Fabrizio

ACCIDENT NUMBER: DCA16FP003

PLACE: Silver Spring, Maryland

DATE: February 14, 2017

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Kay Maurer
Transcriber