

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: MAYRA PINTO

August 2016

Pine Ridge Apartments
8617 Piney Branch Road
Silver Spring, Maryland

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RAVI CHHATRE
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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National Transportation Safety Board
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KALU KELLY EMEABA, Investigator
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STEVE PRICE, Division Head of Systems Operations
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(On behalf of Kay Management Company and Ms. Pinto)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. CHHATRE: We are currently at Pine Ridge Apartments,
3 located at 8617 Piney Branch Road, Silver Spring, Maryland. We
4 are meeting regarding the investigation of explosion of building
5 8701 Flower Branch Apartments, Silver Spring, Maryland, that
6 occurred on August 10th, 2016.

7 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I'm with National Transportation
8 Safety Board, located in Washington, D.C. And I'm Investigator-
9 in-Charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation number for
10 this accident is DCA16FP003.

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

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

24 MS. PINTO: Okay. Good morning. My name is Mayra Pinto.
25 First name M A Y R A. Last name Pinto, P I N T O. And I am the

1 property manager at Flower Branch Apartments. My email address is
2 mpinto@kayapartments.com. My office number is 301-439-9630. And
3 I want to be represented by --

4 MR. PALMER: Mark Palmer.

5 MS. PINTO: -- Mark Palmer.

6 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you for that. Now I'd like to go
7 around the room and have each person introduce themselves.

8 MS. PINTO: Okay.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Please state your name, spelling of your name,
10 your title and the organization that you represent, and your
11 business contact information. Starting from my left.

12 MS. GUNARATNAM: Rachael Gunaratnam, R A C H A E L, G U N A R
13 A T N A M. Hazmat investigator, NTSB. Number: [REDACTED]

14 MR. CLEMENTSON: John Clementson, assistant chief engineer
15 with Maryland Public Service Commission. [REDACTED].

16 MR. PRICE: Good morning. I'm Steve Price. I'm the division
17 head of system operations at Washington Gas. And my telephone
18 number is [REDACTED]. And my email is [REDACTED].

19 LT. OLIN: Lieutenant William Olin, fire and explosives
20 investigator Montgomery County. Phone number is [REDACTED].
21 Email is [REDACTED].

22 MR. PALMER: I am Mark Palmer, M A R K, P A L M E R. I'm the
23 attorney for Kay Management Company, and my telephone number is
24 [REDACTED]. My email is [REDACTED].

25 MR. EMEABA: Kalu Kelly Emeaba. K A L U, K E L L Y,

1 E M E A B A. I'm NTSB investigator. My phone number is [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED].

3 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much.

4 INTERVIEW OF MAYRA PINTO

5 BY MR. CHHATRE:

6 Q. Ms. Pinto, for the record, please tell us your -- any formal
7 education, any experience, how long you have been with Kay, and
8 any other relevant background information.

9 A. Okay. I came to this country in 1987. I'm from Guatemala.
10 And I came to first middle school, to Eastern, and then I went
11 high school -- to Montgomery Blair High School. And then I
12 started as a leasing consultant at a property in Gaithersburg.
13 And then I moved up into assistant community manager. And then I
14 moved to Flower Branch as an assistant community manager back in
15 August 2005. And after a couple of years I was moved to community
16 manager. I've been with Kay Management for almost going to 12
17 years.

18 Q. Thank you very much. If you will just briefly tell us, as
19 community manager what are your duties, typically?

20 A. Okay. Well, my job is in the morning to come in and run
21 reports, check the vacancy status, check turnovers, applications
22 pending, reports, post money, post -- work with the EBS, which is
23 the water reports, because we charge water. Work on purchase
24 orders. Supervise, you know, maintenance, also the leasing staff.
25 Do inspections, triannual, yearly, monthly inspections. Run the

1 work order report, like I said. Make sure that I deal with the
2 contractors. Make sure the work gets done, also. And deal with
3 the daily, you know, resident complaints. Just supervise
4 everybody.

5 Q. Okay. Okay.

6 A. It's just a lot of stuff.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes. Also, with the employees, you know, I'm the one that
9 does the interviews, hiring --

10 Q. Okay. Okay. Now does that include hiring the engineers or
11 technicians who work?

12 A. Well, I do the interview with Rameel (ph.).

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And after we also run a credit -- we do a background check
15 also.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And after we run also their -- like, the previous job and we
18 check and see where they work, and all this stuff, the reference.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And then we make the decision. And Rameel and myself will
21 make decision if we hire somebody.

22 Q. And you said you will be doing inspections. What kind of
23 inspections do you do?

24 A. Well, we do, like I said, I'm -- I do the yearly inspections
25 with my assistant. And also we do monthly inspections. On the

1 yearly inspections, we go to every single apartment and we check
2 for everything, from leaks -- you know, any repairs. And
3 sometimes the residents are present and they will tell us if they
4 need anything. And then we go ahead and make the repairs,
5 whatever they need. And on the monthly, we do the outside. We do
6 the inspection from the outside, the structures of the full
7 property.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Like, we walk the buildings and look at the balconies,
10 laundry room, storage rooms, and just the outside of the property.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And then every 3 years, we get the Montgomery County -- the
13 triannual inspection, which Montgomery County goes in every single
14 unit with a Kay Management member. And they will check for any
15 repairs -- anything that we need to do, in every single unit.

16 Q. And what are the typical work hours for you and the staff?

17 A. Okay. We open from 8 to 6.

18 Q. Okay. And that includes the engineers, mechanics, everybody?

19 A. Everyone, yes.

20 Q. Okay. So after 6:00 everything is locked up?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Now in your monthly inspection you say you look at
23 storage facility also?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you recall when did you do the last monthly inspection for

1 8701 basement and the --

2 A. It was last month.

3 Q. Do you remember roughly --

4 A. Which was July. It was towards the end of July.

5 Q. Oh, end of July.

6 A. End of July.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Usually that's when we do the monthly inspections, the end of
9 the month.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. They have to be due the main office every month at the
12 beginning, the beginning of the month.

13 Q. So any findings from your inspection, you keep a record or
14 you forward it to somebody, or how does that work?

15 A. Yes. We send pictures to the main office and we also create
16 work orders. We use a program named Genworks. That's the program
17 we use, the software.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And then we record every work order that -- when we walk the
20 property and we see something and it's wrong, we have to create a
21 work order, we have to send a picture and we have to correct it.

22 Q. So if you see a problem -- air conditioning or balcony or
23 bathroom, do you have to get a permission to get it fixed from
24 somebody or you can authorize the repair yourself?

25 A. We'll contact the resident and we'll let them know that we'll

1 have to send the contractor to repair it.

2 Q. Like who makes that decision? You do or somebody else does?

3 A. No, I make that decision.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. If it's something that the maintenance guys can't repair, we
6 have to call a contractor.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And we have to notify the residents and we send them a letter
9 to let them know they coming to do the repairs.

10 Q. So can you just -- an example, what kind of repair request
11 you make to the maintenance people? What do your maintenance
12 people repair?

13 A. Oh, okay. What they will repair is blinds, if they need to
14 replace them, outlets. If there is a leak in the kitchen or in
15 the tub, or they need to replace the bathtub knobs, or in the
16 kitchen the knobs of the cabinets we -- a lot of the work orders
17 is just to replace knobs on the kitchen.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Tile on the foyer. So maybe replace the kitchen floor.
20 Replace a lock.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Replace a vanity, a toilet seat. Things like that.

23 Q. Okay. What about the appliances? I mean, if somebody's
24 kitchen stove is not working properly or --

25 A. Okay. If it's not working properly, I send them to look at

1 it. Most of the work that they do is just to replace the burners
2 or clean them. Or the knobs. Maybe they're not labeled properly,
3 you know, because people -- when people wash them, they tend to
4 fade the color of the numbers. So we'll replace them, the knob of
5 the oven -- or the door maybe is loose, we'll replace it. And
6 also recently Chuck, which he works for the -- for Kay Management,
7 he's the one that does the training. Well, he actually retired
8 about a week ago, I think.

9 Q. Name is Chuck?

10 A. Chuck. Yes.

11 Q. And what is the last name?

12 A. Stith (ph.), I think. I'm not sure.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Stith. Stith.

14 MS. PINTO: Stith.

15 BY MR. CHHATRE:

16 Q. Stith. Okay.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. He did some class on how to replace the thermal coupling on
20 the stoves.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That was the only thing we did on the stoves.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. If it's determined, you know, there is a gas leak or
25 something, they will turn off the valve on the back and we'll

1 replace the stove. We don't replace stoves.

2 Q. Okay. You don't repair stoves?

3 A. Replace.

4 Q. Oh, you replace stoves?

5 A. We -- no, we don't replace --

6 Q. Oh, you don't. Okay. So what happens if a stove is not
7 working? What happens?

8 A. If the stove is not working and it's determined that it needs
9 to be replaced -- also, I send my engineer. He will be the one
10 making the last decision if the stove needs to be replaced. They
11 will call API to come and replace the stove.

12 Q. Sure. Okay. Typically the appliances, are they all gas
13 appliances or they're electric, kitchen-wide?

14 A. They're all gas.

15 Q. They're all gas?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So the stove, the oven -- everything is natural gas?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And what happens if the resident complains that they
20 smell natural gas? What do they do?

21 A. Well, if they complain to us, I send my maintenance guys.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And they -- then I will send my engineer again.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And if it's something, you know, they can't fix, then we'll

1 call Washington Gas.

2 Q. Okay. So the -- I guess, when you rent an apartment, the
3 brochure you give them, you ask them to report the gas odors to
4 you first and then to Washington Gas?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Is that correct?

7 A. Sometimes the residents I think they go ahead and call
8 Washington Gas right away.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. They -- which I'm assuming they been doing that.

11 Q. And that's okay with the management? You're okay with that?

12 A. If -- I mean, if they can respond before we can get there,
13 yes. Because, you know, we need service right away if it's a gas.

14 Q. Right. Okay.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So I was going to see if you can -- if you remember.
17 There was a -- couple of weeks before the accident, there was fire
18 department that came in looking for a gas odor. Are you aware of
19 that?

20 A. No. I wasn't aware of that. Are you talking about the July
21 25th, I think they said?

22 Q. I think something around that.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. No, I actually -- I wasn't aware about that.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. No. A resident was the one actually told me about it. And
3 like I said, on that day I was not at work. I was -- I worked
4 like maybe for 3 hours, because I was in the hospital.

5 Q. Oh, okay.

6 A. I was pregnant and I lost the baby.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And I was -- on the 25th, I was in the hospital doing some
9 tests, because on Wednesday the 27th, I had a surgery.

10 Q. Right. Okay. So was anybody in the management was told and
11 Kay Management was told that -- by resident, that, look, I'm
12 smelling a gas odor? And did anybody respond to that before the
13 Washington Gas came in?

14 A. Not that I'm aware of. No.

15 Q. So if the Washington Gas comes -- I'm not -- yeah, Washington
16 Gas comes in to do some testing or repair, would they come to your
17 office?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Or they will not?

20 A. No, they don't.

21 Q. So how will they get into the building? I think the
22 buildings have kind of electronic lock, right?

23 A. Because the -- only in my office, the meters are in the --
24 they are locked. But on the other buildings, the door is open so
25 they can go in. Only if they need to go in this meter room, which

1 was in my office, they will come and get the key from us.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But usually they will just go in the laundry room.

4 Q. But our -- maybe I'm wrong here. But I thought for every
5 apartment building to get through the door you needed some kind of
6 electronic lock to get into --

7 A. Oh, yeah. If they -- we recently put locks in all the
8 buildings. So if they need to go in the building they have to
9 come to the office to get a key to get in the building.

10 Q. So for all the buildings, Washington Gas would have had to
11 come to your office to --

12 A. Yes. Yes.

13 Q. So in that incidence on July --

14 A. 25th.

15 Q. -- 25th --

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. -- how would they go in to investigate the odor if nobody in
18 the office would know?

19 A. Well, I asked my maintenance guys and they said nobody knows
20 about Washington Gas coming on the 25th. If the door was unlocked
21 and they were able to go in without going into the into the office
22 to ask for the key. I'm not sure if that --

23 Q. Sure. Okay.

24 A. -- is the case.

25 Q. Do you know, by any chance, who made that request? Which

1 tenant made that request?

2 A. No. No.

3 Q. No? Okay. Now, in your storage room monthly report, do you
4 remember what do you see in 8701, in that monthly report? I
5 believe you said just -- you went end of July --

6 A. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

7 Q. -- for inspection. Do you remember what you saw in that
8 basement?

9 A. What do you mean? What was inside or --

10 Q. Yeah. What --

11 A. -- or did I see something unusual?

12 Q. Okay. Maybe, maybe I can rephrase. You said you do your
13 monthly inspections.

14 A. Yes. Uh-huh.

15 Q. So what do you look for in the monthly inspections?

16 A. To see if there is any leaks, any problems -- like in that
17 case, if you smell any gas.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I didn't see anything. Everything looked --

20 Q. Do you recall was there any equipment stored in the storage
21 room or meter room? I don't know what you call it.

22 A. No. No.

23 Q. So there will be no snow blower, leaf blowers, that kind of
24 equipment?

25 A. Well, there was a power wash --

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. -- and two backpack -- like the blowers, the small ones.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. And that will be in that 8701 basement?
- 6 A. It was --
- 7 Q. Or storage room.
- 8 A. -- it was there. Yes.
- 9 Q. What do you call it, storage room? Or you call --
- 10 A. A storage room.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Now, as far as your staff goes, how would they enter 8701
- 14 basement? Would they go through your office to go to where the
- 15 meters are or they had to go through a staircase to get in?
- 16 A. They can go from the entrance of the 8701, go down there. Or
- 17 they can --
- 18 Q. Through the stairs?
- 19 A. Uh-huh. Downstairs. Or they can come from my office, or
- 20 from the back office too.
- 21 Q. To go into that.
- 22 A. It was like three, three entrances.
- 23 Q. Okay. And they had access to any one of those?
- 24 A. Uh-huh. Yes.
- 25 Q. And is the door for 8701 always locked? The one from the

1 staircase.

2 A. It was always locked.

3 Q. It was always locked.

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. So how -- is there some kind of record that you will know who
6 entered through what door into the storage room?

7 A. Well, we put an alarm and the alarm is with the same code, so
8 we won't be able to see exactly who went and if they actually went
9 in that storage room. Because we put the alarm and we use the
10 same code. So --

11 Q. So "we" meaning you or we meaning -- who sets the alarm code?

12 A. The last person that stays in the office.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So, for example, that day it was my maintenance guy, Rafael
15 Portillo. He was the last one to be there, and he told me he put
16 the alarm.

17 Q. Alarm on?

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. So that alarm will work even from the door going into the
20 stairwell?

21 A. Yeah. Yeah. When you put the alarm and activate the alarm,
22 it will work in all of the doors, the alarm.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. So anybody -- now, to go from the staircase into 8701 --

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. -- what kind of lock you have? To the door.

3 A. Well, we have to use a key to --

4 Q. A regular key?

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. So your maintenance mechanic, for whatever reason, they go
7 after 6:00, somebody sets the alarm.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. Would they be able to shut that alarm or there is no way of
10 shutting the alarm?

11 A. Like going in there?

12 Q. Yeah. If they -- if somebody goes to the staircase into
13 the --

14 A. They have to go take the alarm off first.

15 Q. So they cannot just go --

16 A. They cannot just go into that --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- room. No. They have to go in the alarm, take the alarm
19 off if they want to go into that room.

20 Q. And how did they go to the alarm room? Well, where is the
21 alarm set?

22 A. It was on the back of the office.

23 Q. Okay. So they have to go through your office to do that?

24 A. Uh-huh. It -- you will go to the kitchen.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then the alarm is right there. And then you make -- you
2 just make the right, and you will go to my office.

3 Q. So the kitchen had an outside door that they can come in?

4 A. Yes. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. But that is not alarmed. That door is not --

6 A. It is alarm. Yes.

7 Q. So if they go through -- I'm a little confused. If they go
8 through the kitchen --

9 A. Okay. When you put the alarm, it's -- when you go in the
10 kitchen, the alarm was right there in front of the door. Like,
11 right there.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. And that will -- the alarm will work for that door, the
14 entrance of the office, the back of the office, the maintenance
15 shop and the other shop from the stairs.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It will arm all of those doors.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So when you take the alarm, then you can get access in all
20 the doors.

21 Q. All those.

22 A. When you put the alarm, it will arm all the doors.

23 Q. Okay. So you have some time after you enter the kitchen
24 door --

25 A. Yes.

- 1 Q. -- to shut it off, I guess.
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. That's --
- 4 A. Yes. Yes.
- 5 Q. Okay. Okay. Now I understand. Now any -- if a new
6 equipment, like water heater or air conditioning unit that's being
7 replace -- and you said somebody -- you submit the request to
8 somebody that water heater needs to be replaced. Did I understand
9 that correctly? Let's just say 8701 water heater needs to be
10 replaced.
- 11 A. Uh-huh.
- 12 Q. How will you go about doing that? Just walk me through it.
- 13 A. If 8701 water heater needs to be replaced?
- 14 Q. Yeah.
- 15 A. Okay. Well, if it's determined that the water heater is not
16 working and it needs to be replaced, I will have to contact my
17 boss first and tell her, you know, what the situation is with the
18 gas --
- 19 Q. And that will be? Who is your boss?
- 20 A. Ruth Joholske.
- 21 Q. Okay. And what's her title?
- 22 A. She's the --
- 23 Q. Well, that's okay --
- 24 A. -- regional property manager.
- 25 Q. Okay. Okay.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So you tell her and then --

3 A. Yeah. I tell her, and then she will ask me right away what
4 year is the water heater, what's the problem, and we'll explain to
5 her. And then we'll contact API. API will have to order the
6 water heater and they will be the ones to also replace it.

7 Q. Okay. Do you know when the water heater in 8701 was
8 replaced?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Would there be a record of some sort as to when it was
11 replaced?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. And we already asked for it.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

15 MS. PINTO: Yes.

16 BY MR. CHHATRE:

17 Q. Okay. Now do you -- and you have -- how long you have been
18 at the Flower Branch? You said 5 or 10 years?

19 A. Eleven.

20 Q. Eleven years, at the --

21 A. Eleven, going almost to 12 years.

22 Q. Okay. Do you remember -- and if you don't, you don't -- but
23 do you remember if 8701 water heater was replaced during the last
24 11 years?

25 A. I don't remember.

1 Q. And if you don't remember, you don't remember.

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. And do you remember if keys get changed if any
4 employees leave? Somebody told us earlier that every employee
5 will have a key to use to go through. All your maintenance staff
6 will have a key. Is that correct?

7 A. A key to go where? To that room?

8 Q. To go to the --

9 A. Every room?

10 Q. Yeah. No, no, no.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Like to your office, to your storage room, meter room.

13 A. Yeah, they have it. Yes.

14 Q. And then also to go to the apartments.

15 A. Yes. The maintenance. Uh-huh.

16 Q. The maintenance crew will have a key?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. A master key, if you would, to go through --

19 A. Not for the apartments. We don't have master key for the
20 apartments.

21 Q. Okay. You only have on your office and storage?

22 A. For the office, the storage rooms, and for the entrance
23 doors.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. We have master.

1 Q. Master key.

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. So if an employee leaves do you -- as a process, do you
4 change the locks?

5 A. Yes. We change the locks.

6 Q. Any time an employee leaves, you change the locks?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And do you remember the last time the locks were
9 changed for 8701?

10 A. It was with my last employee. I think it was sometime in
11 February.

12 Q. Oh, February?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. You can get back to us with the exact date later on. I mean,
15 we can -- that can -- if you don't remember, that's fine.

16 A. I think it was sometime in -- let's see. Yeah, it was in
17 February, I believe.

18 Q. February of 2016?

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. And why the locks were changed at that time?

21 A. Because an employee left very upset. And he actually gave us
22 the notice -- the 2- week notice that we required.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And then he was the person on call for that week. And that
25 day he came and he told me he didn't want to be on call. And I

1 explained to him he needed to be on call because it was his week.

2 Q. Uh-huh. Yeah.

3 A. He told me no. And so I immediately called my boss. Her
4 name Ruth.

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. And I explained her the situation, that he didn't want to be
7 on call for that week. So we asked him, you know, if he wanted
8 that day to be his last day and he said yes, he didn't want to be
9 on call and he was going to leave. So he gave me the keys and he
10 left. He was really upset and he actually made some comments.

11 Q. Okay. But he didn't threaten in any shape? Or did he
12 threaten?

13 A. He did say Kay Management was going to pay for it. But
14 that's it.

15 Q. Oh, you as a person or you -- you as meaning Kay?

16 A. He said Kay will pay for this.

17 Q. Okay. Do you remember the name?

18 A. Melty, M E L T Y.

19 Q. Uh-huh.

20 A. Castillo. C A S T I L L O.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Hernandez.

23 Q. Melty Castillo --

24 A. Castillo Hernandez.

25 Q. -- Fernandez. Okay.

- 1 A. No, Hernandez.
- 2 Q. Hernandez -- H.
- 3 A. H.
- 4 Q. H E.
- 5 A. H E.
- 6 Q. Okay. Hernandez.
- 7 A. Uh-huh. Hernandez.
- 8 Q. Okay. And how long he was with Kay?
- 9 A. He was transferred from Northwest Park to Flower Branch. I'm
10 not sure. I will have to get that information --
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. -- how long he was in Northwest Park, and then he was
13 transferred.
- 14 Q. No, no, how long he is with Kay? I mean, at the Flower
15 Branch.
- 16 A. At Flower Branch, I would say maybe more than a year.
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. But I'm not sure of how much.
- 19 Q. But not like 10, 12 years?
- 20 A. No, no, no.
- 21 Q. For 1 year. Okay.
- 22 A. But I'm not sure how long he --
- 23 Q. Sure.
- 24 A. -- was in Northwest Park.
- 25 Q. So, he was gone February. And when did you change the locks,

1 then?

2 A. Immediately when he left.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. Was he friends with anybody in your staff?

4 That you know of.

5 A. I mean, I know he talks to them.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I'm not sure.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. He does talk to them.

10 Q. And did he do anything after he kind of, quote/unquote,
11 threatened you that Kay will pay for it. Did he do anything? Did
12 he send any letters to Kay or you, as the manager?

13 A. Well, weeks after -- but I don't remember exactly the day --
14 I had a broken windshield on my car.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And they actually left a knife on the back on my windshield.
17 Like, you know, like this.

18 Q. On your windshield?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And did you report that to police?

21 A. Yes, I did.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know what happened after that? I mean, once
23 you called the police, did any -- anything done on that?

24 A. No. They just told me they were going to keep, like, police
25 around, you know, check around my house. I replaced the

1 windshield, and that was it.

2 Q. Okay. But he didn't contact an attorney and sue you or file
3 any lawsuit against Kay?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Not that I know.

7 Q. And have you heard from Mr. Hernandez since the accident?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. And that's all I have. Thank you so much for giving
10 me information.

11 A. Oh, that's it?

12 MR. CHHATRE: Well, everybody is going to --

13 MS. PINTO: Oh. Close.

14 MR. CHHATRE: We are easy.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nice try.

16 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

17 Q. I just had a -- just a quick couple of questions. Maybe --
18 because we were trying to understand the layout of the basement.
19 When you -- can you describe when you come down the stairs what --
20 you know, left, right, like what's on your left and so forth. Can
21 you describe that layout of the office?

22 A. You talking about at the entrance of the building or from the
23 entrance of the office?

24 Q. Entrance of the building, when you come in.

25 A. Entrance of the building?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. Well, you will go downstairs. A step of -- you will go
3 downstairs. And then the storage room where the meters were
4 located, they were on the left, inside.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And then you will have apartment 11 right next to it.

7 Q. On the right, on the right wall, or --

8 A. Yeah. It will be on the right wall.

9 Q. The right wall? Okay.

10 A. And then right next to apartment 11, it will be our office.

11 And then right next to the office will be the other shop.

12 Q. And that's the maintenance shop?

13 A. The maintenance shop.

14 Q. And you said there was a kitchen in there?

15 A. It will be the kitchen.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But that will be like at the other side of the building.

18 Q. Oh, okay.

19 A. Because we will have another entrance and that entrance will
20 take you to the kitchen.

21 Q. Got it.

22 A. And then you will walk to the kitchen and then it will be the
23 maintenance shop.

24 Q. Oh, I see.

25 A. And then it will be a door that will take you to the main

1 entrance from the building.

2 Q. I see. Okay.

3 A. Take you out again on the other side.

4 Q. Yes. Okay. So there is a -- when you -- so there's a total
5 of one, two, three, four --

6 A. Doors?

7 Q. Well, rooms. Like you have --

8 A. Yeah. Let me see. One --

9 Q. -- storage, apartment --

10 A. -- two, three --

11 Q. Office.

12 A. Yeah, four.

13 Q. And maintenance shop.

14 A. Four.

15 Q. Okay. So, four rooms. Okay. And so your office was, okay,
16 yeah, next to apartment 11.

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. Okay. And so who, who -- when you're not working, who takes
19 -- who helps out, when -- like, for example, you weren't there
20 July 25th, because it was --

21 A. It would be my assistant. Her name is Deborah Gallo (ph.).

22 Q. Deborah? Okay.

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. And after hours?

25 A. If it's after hours, they contacted me.

1 Q. They -- sorry?

2 A. They call me.

3 Q. They call you after hours?

4 A. Yeah. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. When a resident moves in, what kind of information do
6 you provide for them when they first move into the Flower Branch
7 apartments?

8 A. Like when we sign the package?

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. The lease?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. Well, we explain to them, you know, about the whole lease,
13 and explain, you know, the terms and everything. We also tell
14 them about the renter's insurance, and if they have any complaints
15 that they need to call, like, us immediately. And that we also
16 have a 24-hour emergency, if they have any problems, you know,
17 they have to contact us immediately. And we tell them the numbers
18 and everything. And we put a lot of brochures in their package
19 also with some information. Also, we give them a checklist.
20 Every single resident gets a checklist of move-in, and we tell
21 them to make sure they tell us as soon as possible. We give them,
22 you know, 3 to 5 days to return the checklist, the move-in
23 checklist, and make sure they tell us, you know, if there is any
24 problems in the apartment so we can, you know, rectify or fix
25 whatever we need to fix in the apartment.

1 Q. What information in that package has to do with, like, gas
2 odors and so forth? Like in that -- is there a brochure for that
3 or -- about what to do when they encounter a gas issue?

4 A. I don't think there's a brochure for the gas. No. We just
5 tell them, I mean, if you have any problems or anything with the
6 stove, a gas smell or something, just to let us know right away.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Is there a -- you said there are numbers in there. Is there
10 a Washington Gas number or --

11 A. They got a number for Washington Gas. Yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Because they have to call Washington Gas before they can move
14 in.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They have to give us a confirmation that they actually got
17 the name changed. So they do have a number for Washington Gas.

18 Q. Okay. And, so any time Washington Gas is on-site is that
19 visit documented?

20 A. No. The only -- we use the key truck, which is where we put
21 all the keys. And when contractors come, they give us their ID
22 and we put the name and everything. The only time that I know
23 they are there is when they do the visit, when they go and they
24 read the meters.

25 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. But then they will bring the keys, and they will --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- they will say everything is fine. That's it. That will
4 be the visit that Washington Gas will do to our complex, when they
5 come and do the reading.

6 Q. For the reading?

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. That's -- okay. So if a resident has to -- is sending -- is
9 calling them for odor complaint, you don't necessarily know if
10 they come?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. And so the work that's done in the basement storage
13 room where the meters are, what kind of work -- who goes in there
14 regularly?

15 A. The maintenance guys.

16 Q. Just the maintenance guys?

17 A. Yes. Because we have supplies, and if they need to get
18 anything to make any repairs. Also, there were some furnace that
19 we had, brand-new, in that storage room.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That's for the engineer. And then we had files, old files
22 that we had in there.

23 Q. Old files?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And just like cleaning supplies. That was it. And some
2 shovels for the snow.

3 Q. Shovels?

4 A. We did have -- yeah.

5 Q. Does anyone -- do painters ever go in there to do painting in
6 the room or --

7 A. Only if I request it. I will let them in, you know, to do
8 like -- paint the floors. Usually we'll do just the floors.

9 Q. Just the floors?

10 A. Yeah. But I will be the one, you know, contacting the
11 painters and tell them, you know, I need my floors to be painted.
12 But recently, no, we didn't have anything painted there.

13 Q. For this year?

14 A. No.

15 Q. No?

16 A. Uh-uh.

17 Q. No painting? Okay. I think that's -- and you call it the
18 storage room, right? Where the meters are?

19 A. The storage room.

20 Q. Okay. What do people call the terrace? Is that --

21 A. That's the apartments that are all the way on the bottom.

22 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. All right. Yeah, that's it.

23 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

24 BY MR. PRICE:

25 Q. Good morning, ma'am.

1 A. Hello.

2 Q. I'm Steve Price, with Washington Gas. The lock change
3 procedure that you referred to having occurred in February. Who
4 performs the lock changes?

5 A. Liberty Locks.

6 Q. Liberty?

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. And would there be a record in your files of those locks
9 being changed at that time? Would you have a receipt or work
10 order or something?

11 A. Well, we have to get a note from them because I'm not sure if
12 we're going to be able to get anything from the office.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Are they local, Liberty Locks? Are they nearby?

16 A. Yes. Uh-huh.

17 Q. You indicated that Mr. Stith had been on-site training.

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. When was that, in relation to the incident?

20 A. Maybe less than a year ago, when he came to do that training.

21 Q. So we had some indication -- I don't know if it's accurate --
22 that he may have been on-site within a few days before this
23 incident. Were you aware of that?

24 A. Yes. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. He did come to do an inspection of the shop.

2 Q. An inspection of what?

3 A. The shop.

4 Q. What shop?

5 A. The maintenance shop, where we have all the supplies. He
6 comes and do an inspection for us to see how it's kept, you know,
7 clean, if we have the supplies. To make sure it can -- it's in
8 good condition, that we have all the supplies and everything. And
9 talk to the maintenance guys.

10 Q. So when you say the shop, are you referring just to the
11 maintenance room of your office or also the storage room?

12 A. The storage room. Everything.

13 Q. And would it also include the other buildings' meter rooms?

14 A. No. It's just that -- just the shop for the maintenance
15 guys. It will be just that one.

16 Q. Was this an inspection that you asked for?

17 A. No. He always does that for every property.

18 Q. So there was no, there was no maintenance issue that caused
19 him to come out that you're aware of?

20 A. No. He actually gave us a 95, 95 points for that inspection
21 that day.

22 Q. Is there a record of that inspection? Do you know?

23 A. Yes. We can get it.

24 Q. And as far as you know, there were no issues of significant
25 to the gas infrastructure?

1 A. No. No. Nothing.

2 Q. With respect to Mr. Hernandez, what was his position when he
3 was employed here?

4 A. Maintenance.

5 Q. So would he have reason to be -- to enter the storage room in
6 8701 during the time he worked here?

7 A. He used to go in there because he was the maintenance --
8 yeah, he did have access to the maintenance shop.

9 Q. How regular was it for your maintenance people to go in and
10 out of the storage room in 8701?

11 A. It's almost every day. Because we have supplies, like I
12 said. Yeah.

13 Q. And other than going in there for supplies, what type of work
14 did he do as a maintenance person?

15 A. Melty Castillo?

16 Q. Correct.

17 A. Like in the apartments, you mean?

18 Q. Correct. Yeah.

19 A. Well, same thing. Like replacing blinds, outlets, kitchen
20 tiles, tub clogs, sinks leaking. Replacing light bulbs, vanities
21 for the bathrooms, countertops -- replace countertops too. Things
22 like that.

23 Q. With respect to the appliances, would he be doing any work
24 with the appliances?

25 A. Same thing as the maintenance now.

1 Q. Knob changes or --

2 A. Yeah. He also was here for the class that Chuck gave them
3 for the thermal couplings. So he was there at that time.

4 Q. When was that class?

5 A. I don't remember exactly. But it's been almost maybe about a
6 year ago.

7 Q. And do you remember Mr. Castillo being present in that
8 training class?

9 A. Yes. He was.

10 Q. And where was that class held?

11 A. That class, they had it at 8711 storage room.

12 Q. Storage room? Meaning the meter room.

13 A. Yeah. No, 8711 storage room, and the meter rooms are not
14 there. They are in the laundry room.

15 Q. So there's a separate storage room?

16 A. At 8711.

17 Q. And the thermal coupling that was being trained on, what was
18 that a thermal coupling to? What was the thermal coupling?

19 A. That was for the stoves.

20 Q. For the stoves?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. Is there a reason you remember that Mr. Castillo was
23 part of that training class? Is there anything that stands out
24 that makes you say that?

25 A. He gave him an attitude that day for the class. Yeah.

1 Q. What kind of attitude?

2 A. Like he told me that, like, he was on the -- on his cell
3 phone and he was not even, like, not paying attention.

4 Q. Did you have to take some action as a result of that being
5 reported to you?

6 A. I talked to him about it. Yes, I did.

7 Q. You talked to Mr. Castillo?

8 A. Mr. Castillo. Yes.

9 Q. What was his reaction to you talking to him about it?

10 A. He didn't say nothing.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. He was just -- he didn't say nothing to me.

13 Q. So you indicated that he made some kind of a threat to Kay
14 Management.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Did he make any threat personal to you?

17 A. Not to me. He just said that.

18 Q. Were you aware of any threats he made to any residents in the
19 complex?

20 A. Not that I'm aware.

21 Q. Since this incident, have you heard of anybody having contact
22 with Mr. Castillo?

23 A. I know that he only called Rafael Portillo, just to ask him
24 how was everything. That's it.

25 Q. And Rafael is your -- currently, your engineer?

1 A. Yes, my maintenance.

2 Q. Your maintenance person?

3 A. Uh-huh.

4 Q. Do any of these individuals live on the property?

5 A. No.

6 Q. There's some information that Eduardo, I guess, is your
7 current engineer.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. What is Eduardo's last name?

10 A. Eduardo Hidalgo. H I D A L G O.

11 Q. And who did he replace?

12 A. Walter Diaz.

13 Q. And can you provide any information on what caused Mr. Diaz
14 to leave?

15 A. This happened in December, before Christmas. And apparently
16 he had problems with alcohol and one day he didn't show up to work
17 and we started calling, calling. He didn't answer. We actually
18 went to look at his house because we didn't know if something had
19 happened to him because he wasn't returning our phone calls. So
20 we went to look for him and we couldn't talk to him. Finally, the
21 wife called my boss, Ruth Joholske, and told her that he was
22 arrested for drinking and driving.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So at that point he came to my house to return the on-call
25 and keys and at that time I told him he needed to come to the

1 office and we will have to discuss the situation at the office,
2 not at my house. So he came the following Monday, I believe. It
3 was a Monday. And he was terminated for that reason.

4 Q. Does that mean that was December of 2015?

5 A. Uh-huh. Yes.

6 Q. Does that mean that you had to change the locks --

7 A. Again.

8 Q. -- in December too?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And if I could go back to Mr. Castillo just for a second, he
11 was terminated in February, approximately, of 2016?

12 A. Yeah. I think it was February 12, I believe. I'm not sure.

13 Q. And after that exchange regarding Kay Management, did -- were
14 you aware of any other contact he had with Rafael or any of the
15 maintenance staff, or yourself, since that time?

16 A. No. Well, I think he came to drop off his uniforms and talk
17 to my assistant, Deborah Gallo. That was it, that I remember.

18 Q. Okay. Would that have been closer to the time he was
19 terminated, or more --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- recently?

22 A. No, closer to the time he was terminated.

23 Q. Okay. Ms. Pinto, there have been reports, you know, in the
24 press, in the news --

25 A. Sure.

1 Q. -- regarding increased gas odors -- or not increased, but gas
2 odors in and around the 8701 prior to this incident.

3 A. Uh-huh.

4 Q. Are you aware of any complaints of a gas odor to your
5 maintenance personnel in and around prior to this incident?

6 A. The only one that I remember was a couple of years ago. And
7 it was around 8703, right in front of the building. Because we
8 noticed a smell of gas and also a plant was like turning brown.
9 And we called Washington Gas, and they came out and they were with
10 my previous engineer -- his name was Jose Fernandez, which he
11 retired, I believe 4 years ago -- and that's when we called and
12 Washington Gas came and repaired the line in there. And then,
13 that's it.

14 I just -- I mean, like you say, there is a lot of residents
15 talking that there was a lot of -- a smell of gas. The only
16 complaints that we usually receive about gas smells is when we
17 refinish floors or we sand the floors. It's when we get the
18 calls, like, you know, it's a gas smell in the building.
19 Maintenance guys will come out and look. And all the time it's
20 because of the apartment that is getting the floors done. Because
21 they will go and check, and that's the apartment that, you know,
22 was -- had the floor done for that day. Usually we inform the
23 residents so that way they don't have to keep calling 911, because
24 that's what they do; call 911 and say there's a smell of gas in
25 the building. That's the reason why we inform them we going to

1 have an apartment that is going to be having the floors done.

2 But that will be the main thing, because usually most of the
3 time when we replace stoves is when we do the turnovers.

4 Residents leave the stoves in really bad condition and we end up
5 replacing stoves. And the only stove that I recall recently, it
6 was in two apartments, which was 8664 103 and 8672 G2. That's the
7 most recent ones that I remember that were occupied and we have to
8 replace the stoves.

9 I hear, like I said, about people complaining about a gas
10 smell. But, as far as I know, they never complained to me. And
11 as far as that apartment -- 8701, apartment 101, it was my uncle's
12 apartment. And I was there almost every day in his apartment, to
13 eat lunch with him, and -- because his wife is really ill and she
14 has cancer. It's her final stage right now. So we were very
15 close right now with him, and I know I used to be in his apartment
16 almost every day. I never smell anything, and -- in that room, in
17 the middle room, and I never smell anything.

18 Q. Including that day of the incident?

19 A. Including that day of the incident. I saw my uncle at around
20 1:00. And he never mentioned anything, and he was the type of
21 person that he would tell me whatever was -- if there was a
22 problem with the plants, a problem with the building, a problem
23 with the neighbor, he will be like right there. My uncle was a
24 resident here for over 26 years. Yes. He loved Flower Branch.
25 He --

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

2 MS. PINTO: He really loved Flower Branch. And like I said,
3 he would have told me if he would have smelled something in his
4 apartment. And we would have -- and, I mean, I used to go there
5 every day, almost every day I was inside.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry for your family.

7 MS. PINTO: Uh-huh. So, and I didn't smell anything. And
8 not even in the gas -- in the meters.

9 BY MR. PRICE:

10 Q. Just one more, just one more inquiry if I could. There was
11 some information that maybe you had to get involved in evictions
12 of tenants when that happened.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And that there may have been that -- an eviction recent to
15 this incident, in July, involving tenants in 8703. Do you have a
16 recollection of that?

17 A. Are you talking about 8703, apartment 11?

18 Q. Correct.

19 A. Well, actually, they were the ones that put the notice to
20 vacate. And the reason why -- I noticed there was, like, a lot of
21 activity in that apartment. And I contacted Montgomery County,
22 and I actually spoke to Officer Merriman (ph.). And I explained
23 to him what was the situation, that I noticed there was some
24 activities going on there. He went there and he checked the
25 apartment. He did mention, like, there was some prostitution

1 going on in there.

2 So I called the leaseholders and I told them, you know, that
3 I don't know about what the situation -- what they were doing in
4 the apartment, but I was going to have to give them a management
5 notice, or if they want to give a notice instead of me giving it
6 to them. And they said no, we going to go ahead and leave. So
7 they actually put their notice to vacate. The notice was for July
8 31st. And they left.

9 Q. Was there any interaction with them or was there any degree
10 of being upset that they had to leave or that the police were
11 called? That you know of.

12 A. They were upset. They were upset because I sent the police
13 there to his house.

14 Q. How do you know they were upset?

15 A. Because they made comments to residents and apparently when
16 they came to the office they said that they were upset.

17 Q. And did they make any kind of a threat to you or to the
18 company?

19 A. No, just to one of my leasing -- he made her feel very
20 uncomfortable because he was just looking at her breasts and
21 started making some comments and she felt really bad about that.

22 Q. Okay. So this is one of your employees? One of -- this is
23 one of your employees?

24 A. Yes. Yes.

25 Q. Who is that?

1 A. Her name is Karina (ph.). She's a leasing specialist. But
2 she's not working right now. She's on an FMLA, prior of this
3 incident. She's pregnant and she was put on bed rest.

4 MR. PRICE: Thank you very much for taking the time today.

5 MS. PINTO: Uh-huh.

6 BY LT. OLIN:

7 Q. Okay. Bill Olin, Montgomery County. There was some, there
8 was some question before -- all right -- Mr. Neil didn't believe
9 that the alarm covered the storage room door. And I believe --

10 A. It did.

11 Q. -- it did indeed --

12 A. Yeah, it did.

13 Q. -- cover that door. Correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. And in our exemplar apartments, the apartments that
16 you all have taken us in to look at, you know, meter rooms and
17 what have you, the gas pipes are all painted yellow.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you recall if the pipes in that storage room, in 8701,
20 were painted yellow as well? Do you remember?

21 A. I don't remember.

22 Q. Okay. That's all right. And do you know if you took a
23 picture when you did your inspection in July? Would you have
24 taken any pictures of that storage room?

25 A. No.

1 Q. You only took a picture if there was something that was, that
2 was --

3 A. Needed to be replaced or something.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Something was wrong. That's when we took a picture.

6 LT. OLIN: Okay. That's all I got. Thank you.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

8 LT. OLIN: And I'm sorry for your loss.

9 MS. PINTO: Thank you.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Kelly?

11 BY MR. EMEABA:

12 Q. This is Kalu Kelly Emeaba.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Sorry, Ms. Pinto, I know the questions have been so much
15 intense. Maybe I just throw in a little. You've just -- you
16 stated the fact that the -- there is kind of access control to the
17 doors, especially into the storage room --

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. -- by the security. Are there means of knowing who actually
20 opened the door or goes in and out? Are they -- is it recorded in
21 any form?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. So, more or less, the only thing you have in place is
24 the security?

25 A. The alarm.

1 Q. Which could be turned off and turned on by someone of
2 anybody?

3 A. Anybody that has the code.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So it could be anyone -- any maintenance, any leasing. We
6 also have five police officers.

7 Q. Is that who actually access the storage room?

8 A. Right. Yeah.

9 Q. So is there any form of a camera close to the --

10 A. No, we don't have cameras.

11 Q. Okay. Which makes it a little bit difficult. There was a
12 previous question already been asked on your customers, which is
13 your tenants.

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. When you have new tenants, if you can just go through it
16 again, what materials specifically do you give to them?

17 A. Well, like I said, it's the lease, which is about nine pages.
18 That covers everything about the contract.

19 Q. Uh-huh.

20 A. Parking rules and regulations. Also, the water addendum. A
21 checklist, that is the move-in checklist. They have to check the
22 apartment and make sure there are no -- everything is working and
23 it's fine.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Also, the phone number for Washington Gas that she asked me.

1 They have that number because they have to get a confirmation
2 prior to them moving into the apartment. And the lead -- we also
3 do a lead test. So they have the results of the lead test that it
4 has passed.

5 Q. Lead from water or paint? Which --

6 A. Paint. Lead, lead paint test. So it has to pass for them to
7 be able to move into the unit.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And then just some brochures. If they want to call Comcast,
10 whatever is around the area. If they want a storage room. Things
11 like that. Just for their information, what we have around the
12 area.

13 Q. Okay. The phone number to the utility company, like the
14 Washington Gas --

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. -- do you give it to them or they have to seek it for
17 themselves?

18 A. No, we give it to them.

19 Q. Okay. And, you know, beside Washington Gas, on your own do
20 you talk to your customers or tenants about the safety use of gas,
21 what they should do in the event -- in case they smell gas in
22 their apartment? Besides calling you, is there any safety
23 briefing you give to them at any time?

24 A. Well, when they have called me and I said, you know, it's
25 about an apartment being done, the floors, I always tell them, I

1 mean, if you have to call Washington Gas, call them immediately.
2 Because, you know, by the time they call us and it might take 30
3 minutes, because I don't have no one that lives on-site. So I
4 always tell them, if you have to call Washington Gas when you
5 smell something, call right away.

6 Q. But is there any written material you give to them, apart
7 from verbal telling them to call?

8 A. No. Like I said, just the number that we give it to them.

9 Q. So you speak to them verbally if you need to call Washington
10 Gas, call.

11 A. That's the number.

12 Q. But it's not written among the materials you give to them?

13 A. Not on the materials. No.

14 MR. EMEABA: Okay. That's what I really want. Thank you.

15 BY MR. CHHATRE:

16 Q. This is Ravi, NTSB. Just couple of questions. Were you
17 working on the day of the accident in your office?

18 A. Yes. I was working.

19 Q. Do you ever go into that meter room or storage room that day?

20 A. No. I just went to the back, but not all the way to that
21 storage room.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I didn't went there.

24 Q. Did you smell any gas on that day in your office?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Any area around the building?

2 A. No.

3 Q. And what time did you leave for that day?

4 A. I think about 4:45.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And I did walk around that area because, like I said, I saw
7 my uncle about 1:00. And I was going to go get some fruits at the
8 store right across from the property, Bestway. And he was
9 actually at the parking lot and he offered me a ride to the store.
10 And I told him no, I can just walk.

11 Q. Walk.

12 A. And he was like no, let me take you. So, he took me. We
13 went there. He dropped me off at the store. I came back walking.
14 I came by that section right there. I didn't smell anything.

15 Q. And which apartment he was staying, again?

16 A. 8701, Arliss Street, Apartment 101.

17 Q. 101. Okay.

18 A. Yes.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. And that's all I have. Thank you much.

20 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

21 Q. Do you remember -- do you recall on the day of the accident,
22 or the day before, August 9th, if anyone went into that room --
23 the basement meter room?

24 A. I mean, if they went it was a maintenance. As far as
25 contractor, I don't know.

1 Q. You don't remember anyone going into that room the day of or
2 day before?

3 A. Maybe we can get that information from the key truck.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Because, you know, my office was in the back. And, you know,
6 a lot of contractors and people come in and they request a key.
7 But, like I said, we ask for the ID if they going to do any work,
8 and then we provide them with a key.

9 Q. Okay. And Wash Gas, did you mention that the only time you
10 documented, like, Wash Gas coming is to check the meters? You
11 were saying Washington Gas would come and check the meters?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. When was -- do you remember the last time they came to do
14 that?

15 A. No. I just remember I think it was a lady that came and
16 requested the key. But I don't remember when.

17 Q. Do you -- this year at all, or --

18 A. Oh, yeah, this year.

19 Q. This year?

20 A. Yeah. This year.

21 Q. Okay. Okay. All right.

22 MR. CHHATRE: John? Steve?

23 BY MR. PRICE:

24 Q. You used the term, when you said you could check the info
25 regarding whether contractors came in. The info from -- I didn't

1 catch --

2 A. The key truck.

3 Q. What is that?

4 A. It's a -- now we have a machine that we keep all the keys for
5 the apartments, the 362 apartments. So if we going to take the
6 key out, we have to put our name, and if we give it to a
7 contractor we'll put which company.

8 Q. So that's a paper, a paper record or it's an automated
9 record?

10 A. No, I think we can have a paper record. Right? With the key
11 truck.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A paper record?

13 MS. PINTO: Yeah.

14 BY MR. PRICE:

15 Q. That is maintained here in your offices or with your company?

16 A. I think we can get it from the company.

17 MR. PRICE: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. CHHATRE: Questions?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't think so.

20 MR. CHHATRE: If not, thank you very much for coming. I know
21 you suffered a personal loss, and we appreciate your time.

22 MS. PINTO: Thank you.

23 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much. Off the record.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

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 Mayra Pinto

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA16FP003

PLACE: Silver Spring, Maryland

DATE: August 2016

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.

Jane W. Gilliam
Transcriber