

able to be interviewed prior to this date as he was intubated and only within the past two weeks had the tube removed. Because of this, he was now able to speak. During the course of the interview, Said stated that:

- He was in bed in his apartment when the explosion happened.
- He had gotten up previously and went to the bathroom (next door).
- It was cold that morning and he did have an electric space heater running in the apartment.
- He also had an overnight guest, Muhammad (the only name he knew), who was also in the apartment.
- He first stated that his apartment did not have a gas-fired heater, but then stated it did not work.
- He also did not cook in the apartment.
- He and Muhammad made it down the stairs after the explosion.

In review with Mark Bishop, a private fire investigator with Prairieland Fire and Forensics, who was retained by CenterPoint Energy, on the date of the incident gas company officials tested the odorant in the natural gas and found it to have an appropriate amount. Testing of the soil outside the structure in the area of the natural gas supply piping failed to reveal any fugitive gas in the soil.

The hypotheses that cannot be discarded include:

- Natural gas leaking from an unknown point inside the structure post meter location and building to lower explosive limit with air at or near an ignition source inside apartment #2 or that area;
- An attempt by the night guest in apartment #2 (Muhammad) attempting to operate the older free-standing natural gas fired heater without success;
- Occupant Said used the bathroom a short time prior to the incident. The weather had been very cold prior to this incident and it is not known if the sanitary sewer piping at or below the "U" shaped trap may have cracked and allowed methane gas into the structure.

Due to the three hypotheses listed, the cause of this incident must be classified as "Undeterminable". This case may also be marked in the closed disposition.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald C. Rahman

Deputy State Fire Marshal – Investigator

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