

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION OF COLUMBIA)
GAS OF KENTUCKY, INC. RELATING TO) CASE NO. 89-268
THE REPORTING OF AN EXPLOSION)

O R D E R

On September 9, 1987, an explosion and fire occurred at 1592 Delaware Avenue, Lexington, Kentucky, that totally destroyed a commercial building belonging to Dan Middleton and equipment belonging to Michael Sanchez, who rented the building.

Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc. ("Columbia") notified the Commission's Division of Engineering, Gas Safety Branch, of the incident as required by 807 KAR 5:027, Section 3 (1), at approximately 10:30 a.m. on September 9, 1987. That afternoon a Commission investigator arrived at Columbia's office and reviewed service order records and odorization records for 1592 Delaware Avenue. All records reviewed appeared to be in order. The investigator was told that the Lexington Fire Department suspected arson and that the area was sealed off until it finished its investigation. The investigator then went to the Fire Department's Third Street location to verify this information and was told by Lt. Glenn W. Parks that arson had not been ruled out at that time. A copy of the Fire Department's report entitled Kentucky Basic Incident Report dated September 9, 1987 is attached as Attachment A of this Order.

On September 14, 1987, a telephone follow-up was made to Columbia to see if a determination concerning arson had been made. Staff was told that nothing had changed since the last contact of September 9, 1987. The PSC Emergency Report that summarizes the telephone reporting was then filed. See Attachment B of this Order.

In June of 1989, Commission Staff was notified by Carol Kenney, a paralegal with the law firm of Miller, Griffin and Marks, that a lawsuit, Civil Action No. 88-CI-3103,¹ had been filed on behalf of Michael Sanchez alleging that leaking natural gas from a distribution line located under or very close to the destroyed building had caused the explosion and fire, and further, that Columbia had a private contractor working in the area when the explosion occurred and that Columbia was aware of unsafe conditions. The Plaintiff further states that a Columbia crew came back to the location the same night to purge gas from the ground around the destroyed building.

On July 24, 1989, Commission Staff was informed by Ms. Kenney and Julie Goodman, an attorney with Miller, Griffin and Marks, that the Lexington Fire Department had issued a supplementary report dated September 15, 1987 which ruled out arson as the cause of the incident and found instead that a gas leak caused the explosion. A copy of this report is attached as Attachment C.

¹ Michael J. Sanchez, Individual, d/b/a Sanchez Textile Unlimited v. Columbia Gas of Kentucky, Inc., No. 88-CI-3103 (Fayette Circuit Court filed September 1, 1988).

The Commission's administrative regulation 807 KAR 5:027, Section 4(3)(b), provides that "if additional information is received by the utility subsequent to the initial report indicating a different cause, more serious injury or more serious property damage than was initially reported, a supplemental telephone report shall be made to the Commission staff as soon as practicable." Columbia has not made a supplemental report to the Commission regarding the Lexington Fire Department Report of a gas leak as the cause of the incident.

Based upon the above information, including the September 15, 1987 report by the Lexington Fire Department, the Commission finds it appropriate and necessary to open on its own motion this investigation of the explosion at 1592 Delaware Avenue.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Columbia shall file the following information with the Commission within 10 days of the date of this Order:

1. Information concerning construction work, including uprating, replacements, repair, pressure reduction, etc. on the main located under the destroyed building, including any work performed prior to and after the incident.

2. Maps showing locations of gas mains and service lines near 1592 Delaware Avenue prior to the incident.

3. Description of the work being performed and the name and address of the construction company employed by Columbia that was working in the vicinity of the explosion site prior to and at the time of this incident, including names and addresses of all

persons working on this project. Also include names of Columbia inspectors assigned to this project.

4. All service (work) orders for 1592 Delaware Avenue for the previous 2 years.

5. All leak repair information for 1592 Delaware Avenue and vicinity for the previous 5 years.

6. A copy of the in-house report resulting from Columbia's investigation of the fire/explosion, including test of and abandonment of main located under the building.

7. Copies of any photos or video tape taken by Columbia related to the incident.

8. A diagram of the site to scale, showing the location of the gas leak, location of the building over the line, and location of other mains in the immediate area serving that portion of Delaware Avenue.

9. A copy of pressure chart(s) for 1 month prior to the fire/explosion for the line under the building and the line serving 1592 Delaware Avenue.

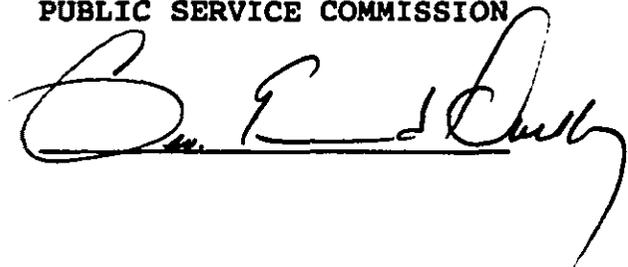
10. Odorant test records for the month prior to the fire/explosion for the line where the leak was discovered and the line serving 1592 Delaware Avenue.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 4th day of October, 1989.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

ATTEST:

Executive Director





KENTUCKY BASIC INCIDENT REPORT

FILED

SEP 16 1987

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Errors contained in this report are intended for the use of the State Fire Marshal. Exemptions and evaluations made herein represent "most likely" and "most probable" cause and effect. Any representation as to the accuracy of reported conditions outside the State Fire Marshal's office is neither intended or implied.

FILL IN THIS REPORT IN YOUR OWN WORDS

L.F.U.C.G.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1. O DELETE 2. I CHANGE

FDID 001550990481	INCIDENT NO 000909987	ISP NO	MO.	DAY	YEAR	DAY OF WEEK 1 Sunday 2 Monday 3 Tuesday	W. A. Wednesday 4 Thursday 5 Friday 6 Saturday	ALARM TIME 0521	ARRIVAL TIME 0525	TIME IN SERVICE	
TYPE OF SITUATION FOUND 11 Structure fire 12 Outside of structure fire 13 Vehicle fire 14 Tents, bunks, grass fire 15 Refuse fire OTHER						TYPE OF ACTION TAKEN 1 Establishment 2 Rescue only 3 Investigation only 4 Rescue request 5 Standby 6 Salvage 7 Ambulance Service 8 Aid in moving up transfer 9 Type of action taken not classified above 10 Type of action taken undetermined reported				MUTUAL AID 1. Recd 2. Given 3. Other	
FIXED PROPERTY USE Textile Finishing Plant 735						IGNITION FACTOR undetermined					
CONNECT ADDRESS 1590 Delaware Avenue						ZIP CODE 40505		CENSUS TRACT 0101600			
OCCUPANT NAME SANCHEZ Textile Unlimited						TELEPHONE 252-3704		ROOM OR APT			
OWNER NAME CWA Local 3372						ADDRESS 1590 Delaware Ave.		TELEPHONE 255-9986			
METHOD OF ALARM FROM PUBLIC 1 Telephone direct 2 Coded signal municipal 3 Private fire alarm 4 Radio 5 Direct report (verbal) 6 No alarm received 7 Unknown to fire to FD						DISTRICT Eng. 1 E91		SHIFT 2		NO. ALARMS 11	
NUMBER FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL RESPONDED 025			NUMBER ENGINES RESPONDED E-5 003			NUMBER AERIAL APPARATUS RESPONDED A-7			NUMBER OTHER VEHICLES RESPONDED 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 008		

NUMBER OF ALARMS FIRE SERVICE	OTHER	NUMBER OF FACILITIES FIRE SERVICE	OTHER
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COMPLEX NO complex	MOBILE PROPERTY TYPE N/A	
AREA OF FIRE ORIGIN Maintenance Shop	EQUIPMENT INVOLVED IN IGNITION undetermined	
FORM OF MATERIAL IGNITED undetermined	FORM OF MATERIAL IGNITED undetermined	
METHOD OF EXTINGUISHMENT 1 Self extinguished 2 Motor driven 3 Portable extinguisher 4 Automatic 5 Reconstructed hose/water carried in apparatus tanks 6 Preconnected hose/water from hydrant, draft, standpipe 7 Hand held hose 8 Motor driven device 9 Carried not classified 10 Undetermined report	LEVELS OF FIRE ORIGIN 1. 0 to 9 ft. above 2. 10 to 19 ft. above 3. 20 to 29 ft. above 4. 30 to 39 ft. above 5. 40 to 49 ft. above 6. 50 to 59 ft. above 7. 60 to 69 ft. above 8. Over 70 ft. 9. Objects in flight 10. Below ground/over level 11. Not classified 12. Undetermined reported	ESTIMATED LOSS (DOLLARS ONLY) HEAVY

NUMBER OF STORES 1 1 story 2 2 stories 3 3 to 4 stories 4 5 to 8 stories 5 9 to 12 stories 6 13 to 24 stories 7 25 to 49 stories 8 50 stories or more 9 Undetermined reported	CONSTRUCTION TYPE 1. 1.1 Fire resistant 1.2 Heavy timber 1.3 Protected noncombustible 1.4 Unprotected noncombustible 1.5 Suggested ordinary 1.6 Unprotected ordinary 1.7 Protected wood frame 1.8 Unprotected wood frame 1.9 Not classified 2. Undetermined	
EXTENT OF FLAME DAMAGE 1. 1 Object of origin 2. 2 Part of room/area of origin 3. 3 Room of origin 4. 4 Fire-rated compartment 5. 5 Floor of origin 6. 6 Structure 7. 7 Beyond structure of origin 8. 8 Undetermined reported	EXTENT OF SMOKE DAMAGE 1. 1.1 Floor of origin 1.1.1 Object of origin 1.1.2 Part of room/area of origin 1.1.3 Room of origin 1.1.4 Fire-rated compartment 1.2. Equipment reported 1.3. Equipment should be reported but not present 1.4. Equipment present but not reported	
DETECTOR PERFORMANCE 1. 1 In room or space/area 2. 2 Not in room or space/area 3. 3 In room or space/area 4. 4 Not in room or space/area reported 5. 5 In room or space/area too small 6. 6 No detectors present 7. 7 Not classified 8. 8 Undetermined reported	SPRINKLER PERFORMANCE 1. 1.1 Equipment reported 1.1.2 Equipment should be reported but not present 1.1.3 Equipment present but not reported 1.2. Utility opening/door 1.3. No status of smoke travel 1.4. Not classified 1.5. Undetermined reported	
IF SMOKE SPREAD BEYOND ROOM OF ORIGIN	TYPE OF MATERIAL GENERATING MOST SMOKE undetermined	AVENUE OF SMOKE TRAVEL 1. 1.1 Air handling duct 1.1.1 Attic 1.1.2 Corridor 1.1.3 Elevator shaft 1.2. Utility opening/door 1.3. No status of smoke travel 1.4. Not classified 1.5. Undetermined reported
	FORM OF MATERIAL GENERATING MOST SMOKE undetermined	

# MOBILE PROPERTY	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	SERIAL NO.	LICENSE NO.
# EQUIPMENT INVOLVED IN IGNITION	YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	SERIAL NO.	

CHECK IF COMMENTS ON REVERSE SIDE

OFFICER IN CHARGE B. Holleran	NAME POSITION Lieutenant	INCIDENT # 7151	DATE 9-9-87
REPORTING OFFICER W. W. Spaulding	NAME POSITION Lieutenant	INCIDENT # (5429)	DATE 9-9-87

REMARKS

On Arrival Eng. 1 reported large volume of flame coming from building behind 1590 Delaware. Eng. 1 crew caught hydrant, cut lock on gate and covered right side of building with hand line.

over

Eng. 5 caught hydrant at Henry
Clay + Delaware and ~~submerged~~ dropped
4 1/2" line to front of Building. Lt. Spickard
and Capt. Short pulled 2 1 3/4" lines and attacked
exposure fire first. Eng. 2 + A-7 crews pulled
another 1 3/4" line from Eng. 5 and supported the
attack. After exposures fires knocked down, attack
lines were directed on main body of fire.
Extinguishment was accomplished, Overhaul was
started. K. U., Columbia Gas and Arson Bureau
were called for by Major Holleran. Eng. 1 crew
released by Eng. 1 crew. PIT 3.
Total status \$3,000.00 on contents
Occupant

P.S.C. EMERGENCY REPORT FORM

DATE SEPT. 9 1987 TIME 10:27 AMCOMPANY Columbia Gas of Ky, Inc.PERSON MAKING CALL: NAME LEROY ELDERTITLE DIST SER. MGR.ADDRESS LEXINGTON Ky.PHONE 255-3612LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE 1592 DELAWARE AVE, LEX. KY.TIME OF OCCURRENCE 5:30 A.M. (APP.)DESCRIPTION OF OCCURRENCE: DEATHS: YES _____ NO ✓INJURIES: YES _____ NO ✓ESTIMATED COST OF DAMAGE ?CAUSE & DESCRIPTION SIGN LANGUAGE INC. A SMALL SCREEN PRINT COMPANY HAD

AN EXPLOSION. C.G. KY. WAS CALLED AT 6:39 AM BY F.D. TO TURN GAS OFF (NOTHING TO INDICATE NATURAL GAS AT THIS TIME). SUSPECTED TO BE GAS RELATED AT 9:55 AM WHEN LINE BEHIND BUILDING WAS FOUND TO BE LEAKING. BLDG. IS SERVED FROM FRONT OF BLDG. HOUSE LINE IS ALONG

EFFECTS ON NORMAL SERVICE

NO OTHER CUSTOMERS AFFECTEDCORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN UNDETERMINED AT THIS TIME9-14-87 LEROY ELDER STATEDTIME OF RESUMPTION OF NORMAL SERVICE N/ASIGNED Leroy ElderTITLE Supervisor Pipeline Safety InvestigatorsDATE 9-9-87

LEXINGTON FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIVISION OF FIRE - ARSON BUREAU
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

CASE NO. AB- 294 37F

DATE OF REPORT 9/15/87

ADDRESS: 1590 Delaware Avenue

DATE OF INCIDENT 9/9/87

~~It is my opinion that the fire that destroyed the Sanchez Textile Company,~~
1590 Delaware Avenue, was caused by an explosion. The building did not
contain materials that would produce such intense heat that would
destroy everything in the southwest area. Particles of clear window
glass were found several feet in the yard away from the front
windows. A screen print frame was found in the top of a tree, partially
burned. A door lock-keeper pin was bent inward, indicating a force
had pushed the door open from the inside. Concrete block walls
were bowed outward in several areas. Walls in the southwest area
were totally collapsed.

We do know there was an underground gas leak in the area that the
Gas Company was working on. Columbia Gas was on the property
September 10, 1987, drilling holes and purging gas from the ground
around the destroyed building.

Major William H. Lilly

LEXINGTON FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIVISION OF FIRE - ARSON BUREAU
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

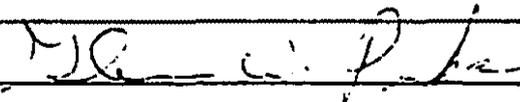
CASE NO. AB- 294 87F

DATE OF REPORT 9/15/87

ADDRESS: 1590 DELAWARE AVENUE

DATE OF INCIDENT 9/9/87

MAJOR LILLY AND I AGREE THAT THE FIRE WAS THE RESULT OF AND EXPLOSION.
MAJOR LILLY'S REPORT EXPLAINS THE EVIDENCE FOUND AT THE FIRE SCENE
INDICATING THAT AN EXPLOSION HAD OCCURRED. WITNESSES STATEMENTS FURTHER
INDICATES THAT AN EXPLOSION DID OCCUR. WITNESSES HEARD A LOUD BOOM AND
THE INTERIOR OF THEIR HOMES AND BUILDINGS SHOOK. THEY INVESTIGATED
OUTSIDE AND OBSERVED FLAMES 75' - 100' IN THE AIR. IT IS MY OPINION
THAT THE FIRE ORIGINATED IN THE CEILING AND ROOF AREA. THERE WAS NOT
ENOUGH FIRE LOAD IN THE BUILDING TO BURN UPWARD AND CAUSE TOTAL DESTRUCTION
OF THE ROOF. THE INTERIOR OF THE BUILDING CONSISTED MOSTLY OF METAL MACHINE
USED IN THE BUSINESS OPERATION. THERE WAS A SMALL AMOUNT OF WOOD AND PAPER
PRODUCT IN THE BUILDING. THERE WAS A MODERATE AMOUNT OF PAINT STORED IN
METAL CABINETS. IT IS MY OPION THAT THE PAINT CONTRIBUTED VERY LITTLE TO
THE FIRE. IT IS MY OPINION THAT NATURAL GAS WAS PROBABLY THE CAUSE OF
THE EXPLOSION. I BASE MY OPINION ON EVIDENCE FOUND AT THE FIRE SCENE AND
WITNESSES STATEMENTS.


LT GLENN W. PARKS