



Saint Paul Fire Department  
645 Randolph Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
(651) 224-7811

## Investigation Report

### Case

#### Case Details

SPFD240428020109	Tweed, Joshua	Closed	24-074-992
Case Number	Lead Investigator	Status	Name
Confidential	Undetermined	Undetermined	
Confidentiality	Disposition	Fire Cause	
04/28/2024	21:46		
Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
Saint Paul Fire Department		Saint Paul Police Department	
Primary Fire Department	Secondary Fire Department	Law Enforcement	

#### Case Narrative

The fire department was called to the report of smoke in the basement of a mixed use building. Firefighters arrived and found black smoke venting from the first floor doorway. The fire was vent limited and located in the basement storage area. Firefighters evacuated the structure, extinguished the fire and conducted overhaul.

One of the occupants on the first floor states he was in his bed when he detected an odor of gas. His apartment is over the room where the fire was discovered. He states he later observed black smoke coming from the base of the wall and floor boards. He evacuated the apartment along with the upstairs residents and dialed 911.

Investigation revealed a vent limited fire in the basement storage room. Atmospheric readings of possible flammable vapors were detected in the area. Police were called to the scene for an initial report.

#### Case Background

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#### Case Synopsis

This report is based on presently known and available facts, data, and information.
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#### Investigation Comments

# Fire

## Ignition Sequence

Undetermined	Storage area, other		
Fire Cause	Area of Origin	Equipment Power Source	Equipment Portability
Area of Origin Comments			
Undetermined			Undetermined
Heat Source	Material Ignited		
Equipment Involved In Ignition	Equipment Make	Equipment Model	Equipment Serial Number

## Fire and Smoke Spread Information

Confined to floor of origin	
Fire Spread Material	Fire Spread Avenue
Smoke Spread Material	Smoke Spread Avenue
Fire Comments	

## Weather

		15	East
Visibility	Relative Humidity (%)	Wind Speed (Mph)	Wind Direction
47.0	0.18	Unknown	
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Precipitation	Lightning	Information Obtained From Weather
Light rain			
Weather Comments			

## Property Details (1 of 1)

### Property

GRAND PAWS PET GROOMING			
Name			
600 Hamline Avenue North			
Address		Apt/Suite/Room	
Saint Paul	Ramsey County	Minnesota	55104
City	County	State	Postal Code
\$216,800.00	\$1,500.00	\$20,000.00	
Pre Fire Value	Content Loss Value	Structure Loss Value	
Property Description			

### Area

Structure	Urban	
Area Type	Area Description	Area Quality

### Structure

Mercantile, business, other		Occupied		
Property Use		Structure Occupancy		
	Yes	Operating Properly		
Alarm Type	Smoke Detector Present	Smoke Detector Performance		
None				
Sprinkler Standpipes		Sprinkler Standpipes Performance		
150		60	2	
Structure Length (Ft)	Structure Height (Ft)	Structure Width (Ft)	Number Of Stories	Number Of Units
Ordinary	Type III	StructureMaterial_Masonry		
Construction Type	Structure Type	Structure Material		
Basement	Brick/Stone	Flat	Asphalt	
Foundation	Exterior Covering	Roof Type	Roof Material	

The interior exam began on the first floor through the south entrance leading into the first floor apartment. A light haze of smoke was present. The living room area along with the kitchen showed no signs of fire or smoke damage. The appliances were inspected and found to be operating properly with no damage. No evidence of recent cooking was found. The stovetop control knobs were in the "off" position. Household items were found stored in the oven area. In the bedroom was found smoke staining above the duplex receptacle on the south wall and staining above the baseboard of that same wall.

No smoke or fire damage was found in the first floor pet grooming area of the building.

The stairwell to the basement was located through the back hallway of the business. Ventilation operations were ongoing at the time. The basement is made up of several storage rooms which are controlled by latch and padlocks. The main storage area was found to have no signs of smoke or fire damage. This room also housed the water heater and furnace for the building. No signs of damage to either of these items. A smoke detector that appeared hardwired and newer was seen mounted in this area. The gas service meter was found in this room and appeared to be functioning properly with no signs of damage.

Moving into the furthest back room closest to the south wall of the building, soot accumulation on the walls and ceiling could be seen. The level of accumulation increased towards back south wall. Heat damage to the PVC piping and wire insulation running through the open ceiling and wall studs in the area was observed. The highest degree of fire damage was found on and around the south wall. Items located in this area include: a window mounted A/C unit, wooden/metal desk, an electrical service distribution panel and debris items on the floor. Fire patterns on the wall studs and first level floor joist indicated a longer burning and higher heat rate for this area. Ignition sources would include: the service panel and electrical wiring running through this area, the A/C unit, and a possibility of an accelerant. The area at the base of this location was examined for the possibility of a detectable Volatile Organic Compound and the monitor detected a higher level than normal. A sample of the debris in this area was photographed and collected for potential testing.

#### Interior Exam

The building is a two story mixed use structure with two businesses on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor. The structure faces north and runs north to south.

The examination began on the north facing elevation and continued in a counter clockwise direction noting areas of smoke and fire damage. The northwest first floor entrance door is in the open position with a dry chemical fire extinguisher placed to the left of the doorway. This was placed here by an employee of the pet grooming business. No signs of forcible entry were observed on the exterior door. The gas service entrance was located on this side of the business and appeared undamaged. No signs of fire or smoke related damage to the north elevation.

The west elevation also shows no signs of smoke or fire damage. A tuck under garage was located on this side. The door was in the closed position with no signs of damage.

The south elevation is set back from half of the total length of the building and has a man door leading to the apartment located on the first floor. No signs of forcible entry were noted to this doorway.

The three electrical service meters were located on the south side and found to all be undamaged with no signs of damage to the weather-head, raceways, or service drops.

At the base of the south brick wall is a covered egress window. Smoke staining to the wall above this area was noted. Soot staining and fire damage to the wooden sill plate above the egress window was observed. A gas container was found to the west of the window well and to the right of the service door. Soot staining to the eastern side of the container lead to the assumption that the container was in that location at the time of the fire.

#### Exterior Exam

#### Alarm and Security Services

None	Yes		
Sprinkler Standpipes	Smoke Detectors Present	Smoke Detector Locations	Fire Suppression
Closed And Locked	Closed And Locked		
Doors	Windows	Other Entrances	

Alarm Protection/Security Comments

Utilities

Electrical Status

Electrical Entrance

Natural

Xcel Energy

Fuel Status

Fuel Type

Fuel Company

City of Saint Paul Municipal Water

Water Status

Water Company

Telephone Status

Utility Comments

# Witness Statement (1 of 6)

## Witness Statement

Reyes	Jesus	
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Discover of Fire	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

1336 Thomas Ave.	
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Street 1

Street 2

Saint Paul	Minnesota	55104
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City

State

PostalCode

Hispanic or Latino	09/03/1996	
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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's Liscense Number

Q: Are you the manager here?

A: I help the owners because they are elderly, I have no title. We have a good relationship.

Q: Can you tell me how you discovered the fire?

A: I was in my room and I was on the phone with my mother, I told her to hold on. It started to smell like gas, I didn't know why. It was coming from my bed which is in the corner of the room. It's is right by the power meters on the outside of the building. I started smelling something from the outlet. I moved my bed and black smoke started to come out from the floor. I started taking video of the smoke. The smoke filled up the room quickly.

Q: Did you call 911 then?

A: Yeah, I was the one who called. I came out and saw Brandon, the gentleman that works at the groomers, he is tall. I asked him what happened. He said a fire started. I said "No shit, have you called the fire department?" He said "No." I told him that we have to call.

Q: What is stored in the basement?

A: I don't know. I don't have access to that space. I actually have video of me entering their store and opening the basement door and all this smoke came out.

Q: Are there any security cameras around the building?

A: No. Not inside or outside. The basement is divided.

Witness Statement Comments

## Witness Statement (2 of 6)

### Witness Statement

Butterfield	Chester	O
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Last Name

First Name

Middle Name

Owner	
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Type

Employer

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Interviewed By

Interviewed By Other

2671 Orchard Lane	
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Street 1

Street 2

Excelsior	Minnesota	
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City

State

PostalCode

White	06/30/1941	
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Race

Date of Birth

Driver's Liscense Number

Q: Do you own this building?

A: Yes.

Q: How long have you own the building for?

A: We have owned it for a long time, almost 20 years.

Q: Have you made any updates to the electrical service recently?

A: Yes.

Q: When was that?

A: Not too long ago, in December. We had it all updated.

The company that performed the service was Finch. They put new meters in. They put an electrical panel in that was new in the basement.

Q: Have you had any problems with the electrical system since then?

A: No.

Q: Have you had any problems with your gas at all?

A: No. Somebody was smoking in the restroom downstairs.

Q: When was that?

A: About a month ago.

Q: Who has keys to the basement?

A: I do and Stacy from the Groomers does.

Q: How long do they normally keep the place open?

A: Sometimes they are open late, like 11 or 12 at night?

Q: Were they here tonight?

A: They had to be (JESUS speaking), because Brandon, the guy who works here, he met me in the back with my dog. I asked "What the fuck happened?" So he had to have been here.

Q: That fire extinguisher at the front door, did anyone take that out?

A: Yeah, it had to be Brandon. I didn't take it out. (JESUS speaking)

Q: How long have the Groomers been in this space?

A: About ten years.

Q: Are they current on their rent?

A: Stacy is.

Q: Have you had any threats to either yourself or your tenants?

A: No.

Q: Do you have any security cameras around the building?

A: No.

Witness Statement Comments



## Witness Statement (3 of 6)

### Witness Statement

Eng	Stacy	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Occupant		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other	
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	
City	State	PostalCode
White	12/15/1964	
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number

Q: When was the last time you were at the Grooming salon?

A: In the morning.

Q: Does anyone else have access to the basement area.

A: Yes, anyone can go to the basement because that is where the bathroom is.

Q: So the bathroom is for the employees of the groomers?

A: Yes, but also the customers would go down there to use the bathroom.

Q: Is there access to the entire basement area?

A: No, the basement is divided up by doors. You can make a big circle down there but the doors are locked.

Q: Do you have access to those locked storage rooms?

A: Yes.

Q: When was the last time that people would be down in those areas?

A: I'm sure my employees were down there today to use the bathroom because Brandon was grooming and Michael was assisting. As far as customers, I don't know which ones went down there.

Q: How were you alerted that there was a fire there today?

A: Michael called me, I live a half a block away. He called me and told me to get there right away.

Q : Did you come to the store?

A: Yes, I ran down to the shop.

Q: There was a woman with blonde hair on scene.

A: That was Pam.

Q: Does she have access to the shop?

A: Yes, I gave her a key.

Q: The back door to the alley, is that normally locked?

A: Yes.

Q: The last time you were at the shop did you notice any odd odors, like gas or chemicals?

A: No. I do know that it gets wet down in the basement when it rains.

Q: The owner stated that the electrical to the building had been recently updated, have you had any electrical issues since the updates?

A: Yes, we have been blowing the circuits like crazy every time we turn the dryer on.

Q: When was the last time this had happened ?

A: It's daily. I'm sure they had to go down there and trip the circuits on Sunday.

Q: It happens that often?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you ever, personally , gone down to the panel and reset the breaker?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember what branch circuit they were?

A: It's one or two all the time. The top left and bottom left.

Q: How many times, in a day, would be the most it has tripped?

A: Six.

Q: Have you ever reported that to the owner at the time, or made them aware of it?

A: No, because he is on his last leg and I try not to bother him. I nearly gave him a heart attack when I told him what was going on.

Q: Have people smoked in the basement in the past?

A: Well, Pam had to use the bathroom and had a portable ashtray in her hands and it was smoking .

Q: Did Michael or Brandon state that they tried to put the fire out at all that night?

A: I think it was Brandon.

# Witness Statement (4 of 6)

## Witness Statement

Krueger	Michael	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Occupant		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other	
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	
City	State	PostalCode
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
Witness Statement Comments		

# Witness Statement (5 of 6)

## Witness Statement

Lenzen	Brandon	A
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Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
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Occupant	
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Type	Employer
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Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other
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420 Ridgewood	
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Street 1	Street 2
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Minneapolis	Minnesota	55404
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City	State	PostalCode
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White	08/15/1982	
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Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
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Witness Statement Comments

# Witness Statement (6 of 6)

## Witness Statement

Boldt	Pamela	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Other		
Type	Employer	
Interviewed By	Interviewed By Other	
Street 1	Street 2	
Saint Paul	Minnesota	
City	State	PostalCode
Race	Date of Birth	Driver's Liscense Number
Woman seen on scene and has access to the shop and basement area.		
Witness Statement Comments		

# Conclusion

## Case Conclusion

After examination of the fire scene, observation of fire patterns of both movement and intensity and interviews conducted, it is my opinion the fire began in the basement. The area of origin was the southern wall and possibly the window well. The first fuel/material ignited was unidentified. The ignition source was unknown but possibly an electrical arcing or overcurrent or open flame device. The oxidant was normal atmospheric air. The action that brought these items together was undefined but could possibly be unidentified electrical event or an intentional human act . The classification of fire cause is undetermined. This concludes my investigation and report.

Technical Review by J. Blank, IAAI-CFI, 6-27-24

## Signature

Tweed, Joshua

Lead Investigator

Signature

Date Submitted

## Document Attachment List

Photo Log

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