



## **SAN LUIS OBISPO CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

2160 Santa Barbara Ave.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
(805) 781-7380

# **FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**INCIDENT NUMBER:** 15-05844

**CASE NAME:** The Sub Fire

**INCIDENT TYPE:** Commercial Structure Fire

**INVESTIGATOR:** Jason Beres- Fire Inspector II

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1 1- VIOLATION(s)

2 N/A

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1     **2-SUMMARY:**

2     On December 26, 2015, at approximately 10:48 hours the City of San Luis Obispo Fire  
3     Department (SLOFD) responded to a commercial structure fire at The Sub, a mercantile  
4     business, located at 295 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA.

5     In response, fifteen engines, three truck companies, five chief officers, three fire investigators,  
6     one ambulance, and multiple police officers responded to support the incident. It took fire  
7     suppression personnel over eleven hours to extinguish the fire, which ultimately spread into  
8     the adjacent business Square Deal Recordings & Supplies (SDRS), located at 303 Higuera Street,  
9     and then into an apartment attached to the rear of the business.

10    Based on the witness statements provided, photographic documentation, and the conditions  
11    observed by responding fire suppression personnel, the fire appeared to have originated inside  
12    or in close proximity to the front display cabinet of the "Smoke Room", located inside The Sub.  
13    This cabinet was located in the northwest corner of the business, directly facing Higuera Street.

14    Due to limitations encountered during the investigation process to establish a safe fire  
15    investigation scene, a comprehensive investigation of the entire fire scene could not be  
16    completed. Therefore, the cause of the fire remains undetermined.

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18    San Luis Obispo Police Department Case #: 151226007

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1 **3- SUSPECTS(s) or SUBJECTS(s)**

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1      **4 - VICTIM(s) or WITNESS(es):**

2      W-1

3      Richard FERRIS

4      365 Branch St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

5      [REDACTED]

6      [REDACTED]

7      [REDACTED]

8      *Can testify to:* He was the co-owner of SDRS and the founder of The Sub Corporation LLC.

9      He was familiar with the building construction methods and property located inside his  
10     business. Upon his arrival, he observed the fire burning at The Sub and the actions taken by  
11     emergency personnel during the fire.

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13     W-2

14     Katie LASSLET

15     1351 9<sup>th</sup> St., Los Osos, CA 93402

16     [REDACTED]

17     [REDACTED]

18     *Can testify to:* She was an employee of The Sub who was inside the building when the fire  
19     was first reported by a store customer. She can testify to the sequence events leading up to  
20     when the fire was first reported inside The Sub. Upon evacuation from the building, she  
21     observed the fire burning and the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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1 W-3

2 Shyanne SEGUNA

3 118 Hermosa St., Shell Beach, CA 93449

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 Can testify to: She was an employee of The Sub who was inside the building when the fire  
8 was first reported by a store customer. She can testify to the sequence events leading up to  
9 when the fire was first reported inside The Sub, including the placement of emergency call to  
10 9-1-1 services. Upon evacuation from the building, she observed the fire burning and the actions  
11 taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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13 W-4

14 Theo MACEY

15 150 Pismo St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 Can testify to: He was a resident who lived at 150 Pismo Street. MACEY was inside his residence  
19 when the fire was first reported next door at The Sub. He was also employed by SDRS.  
20 MACEY also observed the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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1 W-5

2 Scott HAYES

3 304 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 Can testify to: He is the business owner of Scott’s Shop LLC. HAYES was inside his business  
8 when the fire was first reported down the block at The Sub. He was alerted to the fire by the  
9 arrival of a SLOPD vehicle outside his business. He observed the fire burning at The Sub,  
10 and the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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12 W-6

13 Betty O’CONNOR

14 300 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

15 [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 Can testify to: She is a nearby resident who was out walking her dogs during the morning hours,  
18 prior to the fire at The Sub. She observed something “unusual” about the lighting inside the  
19 front display cabinet window, prior to when the fire was first reported inside The Sub.

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1 W-7

2 Jose NUNEZ

3 1040 Archer St., Lompoc, CA 93436

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 Can testify to: He was a tenant who leased a business space inside the basement of SDRS.

8 NUNEZ was inside SDRS when the fire was reported next door at The Sub. He observed the fire  
9 burning and the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

10

11 W-8

12 Tom ZUNDEL

13 307 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

14 [REDACTED]

15 Can testify to: He is the business owner of Quality Fabrics. ZUNDEL was not present at his  
16 business on the morning when the fire was first reported at The Sub. Upon arrival at his business  
17 during the afternoon, he observed the fire burning next door to his business.

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1 W-9

2 Kjerstin FERRIS

3 365 Branch St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 Can testify to: She was the business owner of The Sub, and a Principal of The Sub  
8 Corporation LLC. She was familiar with the arrangement of the property located inside her  
9 business. Upon her arrival, she observed the fire burning inside The Sub. She also observed  
10 the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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13 W-10

14 Nikole WATSON

15 480 High St., Unit 'A', San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 Can testify to: She was employee of The Sub. WATSON was next door at SDRS delivering store  
20 merchandise when the fire was first reported inside The Sub. Upon evacuation from the  
21 building, she observed the fire burning next door at The Sub. She also observed the actions  
22 taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

23

1 W-11

2 Jeremy SALINAS

3 1457 Willow Rd., Nipomo, CA 93444

4 [REDACTED]

5 [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]

7 Can testify to: He was employed by both The Sub and SDRS. SALINAS was familiar with the  
8 property and the construction methods utilized in the front display cabinets at The Sub.

9 SALINAS was inside SDRS when the fire was first reported inside The Sub. Upon evacuation  
10 from the building, he observed the fire burning and the actions taken by emergency  
11 personnel during the fire.

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13 W-12

14 Mackenzie MONTAGNA

15 469 Sandercock St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 Can testify to: She was an employee of The Sub and was inside the building when the fire was  
20 first reported by a store customer. She can testify to the sequence of events leading up to  
21 when the fire was first reported inside The Sub. Upon evacuation of the building, she  
22 observed the fire burning and the actions taken by emergency personnel during the fire.

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1      **5-EVIDENCE:**

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1      **6 – PHYSICAL CONDITIONS:**

2      Weather:

3      Temperature Range: Maximum Temperature: 61°F, Minimum Temperature: 37°F.

4      Dew Point: 28°F.

5      Humidity: 44%.

6      Visibility: Approximately 10 miles.

7      Wind Direction: Variable, Maximum Wind Speed: 5 mph.

8      Source: Weather Underground, [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

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1      **7 – VEHICLE(s) or Equipment**

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**1 8 – PROPERTY:**

2 Business name: The Sub.

3 Business address: 295 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

4 Building Construction: VA, single story commercial building with a basement.

5 Occupancy Classification: Mercantile

6 Floor Area: Approximately 3880 Sq. Ft.

7 Fire Sprinkler System: No system installed.

8 Fire Alarm System: No system installed.

9 Estimated Value of Loss: \$778,014.

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11 Business Name: Square Deal Recordings & Supplies (SDRS)

12 Business address: 303 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

13 Building Construction: III-B, single story commercial building with a basement.

14 Occupancy Classification: Mercantile, S-1 moderate hazard storage.

15 Floor Area: 6000 Sq. Ft.

16 Fire Sprinkler System: No system installed.

17 Fire Alarm System: Yes, heat detection in basement.

18 Estimated Value of Loss: \$608,520

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1      **8 – PROPERTY (CONTINUED):**

2      Building Name: Unknown (Residential occupancy)

3      Address: 150 Pismo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

4      Building Construction: V-N, single story building.

5      Occupancy Classification: F-2 per City records. (Residential occupancy prior to the fire).

6      Floor Area: Unknown.

7      Fire Sprinkler System: No system installed.

8      Fire Alarm System: Residential smoke alarm units.

9      Estimated Value of Loss: Please reference 303 Higuera Street (SDRS).

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11      Business Name: Quality Fabrics

12      307 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

13      Building Construction: II-B, single story commercial building.

14      Occupancy Classification: Mercantile

15      Floor Area: Approximately 5000 Sq. Ft.

16      Fire Sprinkler System: No system installed.

17      Fire Alarm System: No detection system installed.

18      Estimated Value of Loss: \$185,000.

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**1 9 – NARRATIVE**

2 On Saturday, December 26, 2015 at approximately 10:48 hours, a commercial structure fire was  
3 reported at The Sub, located at 295 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401.

4 A request for a Fire Investigator was sent to the City of San Luis Obispo Emergency  
5 Communications Center (SLO-ECC). The time of dispatch was approximately 11:49 hours.

6 At 17:22 hours, SLOFD Battalion Chief Neal BERRYMAN updated SLO-ECC that a Fire Investigator  
7 had arrived on scene at the fire. CAL-FIRE Investigator Kevin MCCLEAN was the first Fire  
8 Investigator on scene at approximately 17:22 hours. At the time of his arrival, fire suppression  
9 operations were still in progress.

10 SLOFD personnel remained on scene through the evening hours to prevent potential flare-ups  
11 and to maintain custody of the fire scene until the morning hours in order to continue the fire  
12 investigation.

13 On the evening of Saturday, December 26, 2015, SLOFD Inspector Jason BERES was requested by  
14 SLOFD Fire Marshal Rodger MAGGIO to assist with the fire investigation at The Sub. Due to the  
15 time of dispatch and the extent of firefighting operations still in progress, his initial response  
16 was postponed until the next morning.

17 On Sunday, December 27, 2015, I arrived on scene of the fire at approximately 08:51 hours. I  
18 parked on Walker Street, just to the north of Appendage & Bough, located at 315 Walker Street.

19 I made contact with MCCLEAN who then provided me with a verbal report on conditions.

20 While walking down Pismo Street, I also made contact with SLOFD Deputy Chief Jeff GATER.

21 GATER provided me with the contact information of Jose NUNEZ, a tenant who had been  
22 reported missing the evening prior. GATER also informed me that NUNEZ had been identified  
23 earlier in the morning hours when he returned to the fire scene to move his automobile.

**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 Following my conversation with GATER, I headed west down Pismo Street towards the front  
3 parking lot of The Sub. I made contact with SLOFD Chief Garret OLSON who also provided me with  
4 a verbal report on conditions as well as an update regarding which SLOFD personnel were  
5 currently assigned to the fire scene.

6 After my conversation with Olson, I continued my initial walk around the perimeter of the street  
7 block associated with the fire to document the street names, building locations, emergency  
8 apparatus, and the security measures enacted around the perimeter of the fire scene.

9 Following my walk, I returned to the front parking lot of The Sub to meet with OLSON and Cal-Fire  
10 Investigators Zach NICKOLS, Kevin MCCLEAN who were on-scene at the fire prior to my arrival.

11 The purpose of our meeting was to determine scene safety measures and identify potential  
12 access issues for buildings and property associated with the fire. The buildings involved in the fire  
13 were initially determined by OLSON to be unsafe to enter for fire investigation without further  
14 assessment by the City Building Official.

15 A request to dispatch the City Building Official was reported at 09:06 hours. SLO-ECC updated  
16 BERRYMAN that City Building Official Anne SCHNEIDER would respond within approximately  
17 thirty minutes.

18 Following this meeting, the fire investigation process was transitioned over to SLOFD personnel  
19 from MCCLEAN and NICKOLS, who had responded to the incident prior to my arrival. Under the  
20 direction of OLSON, I was then designated as the Lead Fire Investigator for the incident.

21 While awaiting the response of the City Building Official, I made contact with R. FERRIS on the  
22 southwest corner of Pismo Street and Walker Street. During this conversation with R. FERRIS, I  
23 was accompanied by MCCLEAN and an officer from SLOPD.

**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 R. FERRIS described to me from his perspective how the fire started. He also informed me  
3 about his prior contact with SLOFD personnel during the fire, and prior to my arrival. R. FERRIS  
4 requested that the buildings involved in the fire and his property located inside be preserved until  
5 until he could obtain a Fire Investigator from his insurance company.

6 R. FERRIS was advised that his requests would be relayed over to OLSON. He was also asked to  
7 coordinate with his insurance company and provide further information regarding when arrival  
8 could be expected. R. FERRIS also reported that his insurance information was located inside the  
9 building, which he did not have access to at this point in time.

10 Under the direction of OLSON, I also asked R. FERRIS to contact a fire restoration business to  
11 provide temporary fencing around the perimeter of both buildings, so that SLOFD, SLOPD and  
12 Public Works staff could begin to clear up debris and open up traffic lanes on Higuera Street and  
13 Pismo Street. He advised me that he would contact his insurance representative to coordinate  
14 further resources.

15 Following this conversation with R. FERRIS, SCHNEIDER arrived on scene shortly afterwards to  
16 provide further evaluation of the buildings involved in the fire. I then relayed the response from  
17 R. FERRIS over to OLSON and SCHNEIDER.

18 To render the scene safe for entry during the fire investigation, OLSON had initially requested a  
19 City backhoe to evaluate the removal of a partially collapsed front overhang and other unstable  
20 structural components, such as the front parapet wall located to the left of the main entrance of  
21 The Sub.

22 According to OLSON, these two structural components were compromised and posed an eminent  
23 threat to anyone working below them.

1       **9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2       SCHNEIDER also concluded that the structural integrity of buildings involved in the fire had been  
3       compromised and that they were not safe to occupy in their current condition. She  
4       recommended to OLSON that temporary bracing measures be installed prior to conducting an  
5       interior fire investigation.

6       Since there was no evidence obtained by this point in time that this incident was a potential crime  
7       scene and since there were no injuries or fatalities associated with the fire, OLSON honored  
8       R. FERRIS'S request to maintain the integrity of the building and property inside for further  
9       investigation by R. FERRIS and his insurance representatives.

10      As a result, SLOFD personnel were not able to safely enter The Sub or SDRS to conduct an interior  
11      investigation in order to determine the precise area of origin and cause of the fire.

12      During the morning hours of Sunday, December 27, 2015, interviews were conducted with Katie  
13      LASSLET and Shyanne SEGUNA, both employees of The Sub who were present during the fire  
14      investigation. Their statements have been provided in this report.

15      Following the interviews of LASSLET and SEGUNA, I resumed the process of documenting the fire  
16      scene to examine post-fire conditions, as safely viewed from the exterior of each building.

17      During the afternoon, I contacted R. FERRIS a second time. He was asked to provide an update  
18      regarding the arrival of Fire Investigation staff from his insurance company. R. FERRIS reported  
19      that he had made notification, but did not have an established date and time of arrival confirmed.

20      When reminded about the City's request to set up temporary fencing around the property, R.

21      FERRIS advised me that a fire restoration business would arrive the following morning to set up  
22      a boundary around the perimeter of The Sub and SDRS.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 Around Sunset, I transferred custody of the fire scene back to SLOFD personnel, assigned to SLOFD  
3 Truck-2, staged at the southeast corner of Pismo Street and Walker Street. SLOFD personnel  
4 remained on scene during the evening hours and into the next morning.

5 On the morning of Monday, December 28, 2015, I arrived on scene at approximately 09:00 hours  
6 to continue the fire investigation and scene examination of The Sub and SDRS.

7 I took photographs of the fire scene from the exterior of both buildings. Aerial photographs were  
8 also obtained from the ladder of SLOFD-Truck-2, which had been extended above the fire scene  
9 prior to my arrival.

10 During the fire scene examination, City Building Inspector Mark SADOWSKI arrived on scene.

11 Under the direction of the City Building Official, buildings significantly damaged during the fire  
12 had been identified as unsafe to occupy. Signage was then posted on the front door of The Sub,  
13 SDRS, and the apartment at 150 Pismo Street by SADOWSKI which reflected this condition.

14 During the early afternoon on December 28, 2015, I called GATER to provide an update on the  
15 status of the fire investigation. I also advised him and OLSON that I had not been provided with  
16 a confirmed date and time of arrival for additional Fire Investigation staff from the insurance  
17 representatives of R. FERRIS, as based upon my previous conversation with R. FERRIS in the  
18 early afternoon a day prior.

19 I also informed GATER and OLSON that the initial photographic documentation of the fire scene  
20 had been completed, based upon the conditions of building access which were encountered  
21 during the investigation process. As a result, the decision was reached to return custody of the  
22 property and buildings associated with the fire back to their respective ownership.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 Under the direction of OLSON, I then notified R. FERRIS of this decision. I informed him during a  
3 phone call that custody of the fire scene would be returned to the property and business owners  
4 affiliated with The Sub and SDRS later that afternoon. His attendance along with the other  
5 business owners affiliated with the Sub Corporation was requested. A meeting time was arranged  
6 at approximately 17:00 hours.

7 That afternoon, a meeting was held at the intersection of Walker Street and Pismo Street, near  
8 the southeast corner of the property. It was held at approximately 17:00 hours and was attended  
9 by members of The Sub Corporation and several City representatives.

10 Members of the Sub Corporation who attended this meeting included R. FERRIS, K. FERRIS,  
11 Raymond HANSON, and several other immediate family members not identified during the  
12 investigation process.

13 City representatives present for this meeting included Christine DIETRICK, City Attorney; Jon  
14 ANSOLABEHERE, Assistant City Attorney; SLOFD Chief OLSON; SLOFD Deputy Chief GATER; SLO  
15 FD Acting Battalion Chief John MACDONALD; Storm-Water Code Enforcement Officer Joe LITTLE;  
16 Building Official Anne SCHNEIDER; and SLOFD INSPECTOR II BERES.

17 The objective of this meeting was to identify the recommended actions to safeguard personal  
18 property post-fire, and to identify the steps required to begin the reconstruction process. Building  
19 and business owners affiliated with the Sub Corporation were also provided with the opportunity  
20 to ask questions or to express their concerns to City Officials present.

21 Following this meeting, the fire scene was turned over to R. FERRIS and other members associated  
22 with the Sub Corporation by GATER at approximately 17:54 hours.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 Throughout the next two weeks following the preliminary investigation of the fire scene,  
3 subsequent interviews were arranged with store employees of The Sub, SDRS, the business  
4 owners, and nearby citizens who observed the fire.

5 On December 30, 2015, tenant Theo MACEY was interviewed by phone. MACEY was a resident  
6 who lived at 150 Pismo Street. For further reference, please review the witness statements  
7 provided by MACEY in this report.

8 On December 31, 2015, Scott HAYES and Betty O'CONNOR were interviewed in person at Scott's  
9 Shop, located at 304 Higuera Street. HAYES was the business owner of Scott's Shop LLC.  
10 O'CONNOR was a resident who lived next door at 300 Higuera Street. For further reference,  
11 please review the witness statements provided by HAYES and MACEY in this report.

12 On January 6, 2016, tenant Jose NUNEZ was interviewed by phone. NUNEZ was a tenant who  
13 leased a business space, located in the basement of SDRS. For further reference, please review  
14 the witness statements provided by NUNEZ in this report.

15 On January 7, 2016, K. FERRIS was interviewed by phone. K. FERRIS was the business owner of The  
16 Sub. For further reference, please review the witness statements provided by K. FERRIS in this  
17 report.

18 On January 7, 2016, following the interview of K. FERRIS, Nickole WATSON was interviewed by  
19 phone. WATSON was an employee of The SUB. For further reference, please review the witness  
20 statements provided by WATSON in this report.

21 On January 8, 2016, Jeremy SALINAS was interviewed by phone. He was an employee of SDRS. For  
22 further reference, please review the witness statements provided by SALINAS in this report.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-(CONTINUED)**

2 On January 7, 2016 Tom ZUNDEL was interviewed by phone. ZUNDEL was the business owner of  
3 Quality Fabrics, located at 305/307 Higuera Street. For further reference, please review the  
4 witness statements provided by ZUNDEL in this report.

5 On January 11, 2016 Mackenzie MONTAGNA was interviewed by phone. MONTAGNA was an  
6 employee of The Sub. For further reference, please review the witness statements provided by  
7 MONTAGNA in this report.

8 On January 13, 2016 R. FERRIS was interviewed a second time, in person at his residence. R. FERRIS  
9 was the co-owner of SDRS. For further reference, please review the witness statements provided  
10 by R. FERRIS in this report.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION**

2 Access to The Sub, SDRS, and the apartment located at 150 Pismo Street was restricted due to  
3 significant safety concerns regarding the structural stability of both buildings as noted previously  
4 in this report.

5 To commence the fire scene examination, I conducted an initial walk around the perimeter of the  
6 street block associated with the fire. This action was performed in order to document the street  
7 names, building locations, emergency apparatus, and the various security measures enacted  
8 around the perimeter of the fire scene.

9 Both vehicular traffic and pedestrian access by the public had been restricted around the  
10 perimeter by barricades and SLOPD Officers. Traffic control measures had been placed between  
11 the intersections of Higuera Street, Walker Street, and Pismo Street. The perimeter of the  
12 incident had been secured by marking tape to indicate the perimeter of the fire scene. See  
13 photographic evidence for further reference.

14 Following the completion of witness interviews with store employees LASSLET and SEGUNA, I then  
15 resumed the process of documenting the fire scene to examine post-fire conditions as viewed  
16 from the exterior of each building.

17 At the intersection of Pismo Street and Walker Street, a shipping and receiving area for the SDRS  
18 warehouse was visible from the street. Adjacent to the warehouse was Appendage & Bough, a  
19 small commercial business located at 1335 Walker Street. A large shipping container truck had  
20 been parked alongside the back of the building.

21 The exterior awning located outside the SDRS warehouse had collapsed on to the ground during  
22 the fire. A cable line was present, entering the top corner of the building.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 On the back side of SDRS was a small parking lot. SLOFD crews were on-scene conducting overhaul  
3 and the removal of foam used during fire suppression operations. SLOFD Truck-1 had been left  
4 on scene, staged at the southwest corner of Pismo Street and Higuera Street. The aerial ladder  
5 was extended to conduct aerial master stream operations as needed during the evening hours  
6 prior to my arrival.

7 Several windows along the back side of the building were found in a broken condition. A large  
8 hole had been breached in the wood paneling, in order to determine the extent of fire  
9 development into the building during fire suppression operations.

10 Fire patterns generated by the ventilation of smoke and direct flame contact were observed on  
11 the exterior roof, directly above associated windows. The dumpster located at the corner of the  
12 parking spaces was found in the closed position.

13 From a viewpoint looking southwest down Pismo Street, the main entrance to the apartment  
14 located at 150 Pismo Street was visible from the street. Located just outside the stairs and leading  
15 up to the residence was a yellow container truck which appeared to be closed. Pallets and several  
16 stacks of wood were found stored underneath the container truck.

17 Several windows associated with the apartment were found in a broken condition. Fire patterns  
18 from smoke were observed above the front window facing Pismo Street. Several piles of debris  
19 were scattered along the side of the property.

20 Roofing material and structural members associated with the roof assembly had spilled over onto  
21 the rain gutters of the building.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 At 100 Pismo Street, wood paneling on the exterior of the building located to the left of the  
3 address signage had been removed. Wall studs and framing between the first and second floors  
4 of the building were visible. Interior property visible from the sidewalk had sustained moderate  
5 damage. Smoke damage and charring was observed on the wall studs, closest to the attic space.  
6 The wall studs closest to the main entrance had sustained less damage.

7 The aboveground electrical service was located to the right of an access door from backside of  
8 The Sub and 100 Pismo Street. Electrical wiring from the weather head to the overhead service  
9 drop had been severed, and the meter had been pulled.

10 The door next to the electrical meter was found in the open position. Panic hardware was installed  
11 and a large pile of metal debris was observed outside the door. Smoke deposition was observed  
12 above the door header and on the interior of the door. The bottom portion of the door had  
13 minimal discoloration from smoke and heat exposure during the fire.

14 Located directly to the left of 100 Pismo Street was the back wall of The Sub. A sign located on  
15 the exterior parapet wall identified the business. The sign sustained significant damage due to  
16 direct flame contact, smoke, and the heat generated by the fire. The effects of heat and smoke  
17 had also produced discoloration on the wall around the perimeter of the sign.

18 The wood paneling on the back side of the building had been penetrated. Charring was observed  
19 on the wood paneling, as noted in the corners of the wall.

20 A display rack containing store merchandise that had not been entirely consumed during the fire  
21 was visible through the wood paneling. A manikin display was noted inside the Sub, directly  
22 adjacent to a merchandise display rack. The clothing on the manikin display had sustained  
23 moderate smoke damage, but had not been consumed during the fire.

**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 Metal framing of the suspended ceiling was also noted. In some locations, the suspended wiring  
3 had been compromised, while in other locations the wiring appeared to be structurally intact.

4 Two exterior doors on the left side of the wall were found in the closed position. The wood panel  
5 board material had been removed by fire suppression personnel to gain access during the fire.

6 Several piles of wood paneling and associated debris were also observed on the sidewalk outside  
7 the building.

8 At the intersection of Pismo Street, High Street, and Higuera Street, three windows were visible  
9 at the southwest corner of the property. The glass was found broken out of each window. Fire  
10 patterns due to the ventilation of direct flame and smoke were observed at the top of each  
11 window. A metal component of the roof structure was also observed, hanging off to the right  
12 side of the building.

13 As observed around other intersections bordering the buildings associated with the fire, access to  
14 the property by the public had been restricted. Yellow fire line tape had been posted to prohibit  
15 unauthorized entry, and a City Police Department vehicle was present. The vehicle was parked  
16 on Higuera Street, just outside the parking spaces.

17 Out front of The Sub, several parking spaces were identified, and now vacant due to the fire.

18 Several piles of debris were found in the parking lot, and near the streetlight.

19 Located to the right of the main entrance was a series of thirteen to fifteen display windows,  
20 arranged in some type of storefront display cabinet. Minor smoke damage was observed inside  
21 this compartment. Glass associated with these windows was found in a broken condition,  
22 partially inside the display cabinet. Lighting fixtures were installed inside this compartment, the  
23 majority supplied by wall mounted power strips and a track lighting display.

**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 A wood barrier was located behind the display cabinet, separating the compartment from the  
3 main floor of The Sub. A small amount of store merchandise was located at the rear of the display  
4 cabinet floor and was in contact with the plywood wall. The majority of light bulbs had been  
5 broken during the fire.

6 Above the main entrance to The Sub, a circular sign was present. The sign appeared to be  
7 anchored and suspended, just above the front overhang of the building. Minor damage due to  
8 the effects of smoke and heat was observed on the sign.

9 To the left of the sign, the front overhang was found in a structurally compromised condition,  
10 hanging from an exterior wall.

11 Extensive fire damage was observed on the overhang. The exterior layer of wood and paint had  
12 been consumed during the fire and extensive charring was noted due to the effects of direct  
13 flame contact. The greatest amount of char was observed at the left end of the overhang, closest  
14 to Higuera Street.

15 The parapet wall located just above the overhang had partially collapsed, inward into the building.  
16 As viewed from the parking lot, moderate fire and smoke damage was observed inside the display  
17 cabinets, just to the left of the store entrance.

18 The display window glass was found broken inside both cabinets. Fuel sources such as record  
19 memorabilia, a manikin, and the cardboard display of R2-D2 as documented by the business  
20 owner had been consumed during the fire.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 The plywood barrier which provided separation between the cabinet and the Smoke Room had  
3 sustained moderate fire damage. Plywood located towards the left corner of the cabinet and  
4 closest to the street had been consumed during the fire. The plywood closest to the main  
5 entrance of the building had sustained significantly less damage. Wall studs were visible in both  
6 cabinets exposing the interior compartment of the Smoke Room.

7 Electrical wiring was observed, suspended from wood paneling on the underside of the overhang,  
8 closest to the street. The wood paneling below the overhang had sustained extensive fire  
9 damage. An orange extension cord was present, which ran up into the roof structure, just above  
10 the overhang.

11 On the sidewalk of Higuera Street, a section of the overhang was found on the ground. Roofing  
12 materials associated with the overhang were found fastened to the structural wood members. An  
13 orange extension cord was found plugged into an unidentified electrical appliance, not visible for  
14 further examination. The supply end of the extension cord was found in an unplugged position.  
15 An electrical raceway ran the width of the underside portion of the overhang. Various glass and  
16 debris associated with the fire was also observed on the sidewalk and on the bicycle lane of  
17 Higuera Street.

18 The front display cabinet above had sustained extensive fire damage. The display window glass  
19 was found broken, with a small amount deposited at the street. The plywood barrier which  
20 separated the display cabinet from the Smoke Room had been consumed by the fire in several  
21 locations. Most of the plywood barrier associated with the right side of the display cabinet had  
22 been consumed during the fire. Behind the plywood, structural components from the collapsed  
23 roof assembly were visible, located inside the Smoke Room.

**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 Wall studs separating the Smoke Room from the display cabinet also sustained extensive fire  
3 damage. Charring was observed on both sides of the wall studs, located in the center of the  
4 display cabinet.

5 An absence of conventional fire blocking was noted in all areas of the cabinet that could be  
6 observed from street view.

7 Fire blocking is a component of building construction, designed to prevent the passage of flame  
8 to other areas inside the building through concealed spaces. Evidence of fire blocking installation  
9 would include segments of fire blocking consumed during the fire, or nails secured into charred  
10 wall studs where the fire blocking would have been installed prior to the fire.

11 Based upon observation, there was no indication that fire blocking was installed prior to the fire.

12 Extensive fire damage to the ceiling joists was noted towards the center of the cabinet. Extensive  
13 charring due to direct flame contact was observed on several joists. Towards the left side of the  
14 cabinet, less charring was observed. For further reference, please review the photographic  
15 report.

16 Metal framing was also present inside this cabinet. Oxidation and bowing was observed on the  
17 top side of the metal frame. The restraining mechanism which held the metal framing in position  
18 prior to the fire had failed, causing the metal to fall across the base of the cabinet.

19 The parapet wall located directly above the display cabinet had sustained extensive fire damage.

20 The exterior stucco assembly was cracked in several locations due to extensive heat and direct  
21 flame exposure.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 Located to the north of The Sub was SDRS. This business was located at 303 Higuera Street. The  
3 main entrance to the building was visible from the street. Access to the stairway was partially  
4 obstructed due to store merchandise and wood framing that had collapsed during the fire. Glass  
5 paneling above the main entrance to the building was found broken.

6 An electrical lighting fixture was noted to the right of the main entrance. The lightbulb associated  
7 with this fixture was intact, and visible from street view.

8 The door to the business was found in an open position. Charring and moderate smoke damage  
9 was observed on the exterior wood paneling, located directly above the metal framing of the  
10 door.

11 From street view, property inside the main entrance to the store was found scattered across the  
12 front stairs. Some of the property was combustible in nature, such as the sign noted below the  
13 light fixture. Minor smoke damage was observed on the sign. Charred wood framing from the  
14 attic rafters had collapsed from the roof structure and was found resting on the floor at the top  
15 of the stairway landing.

16 Minor smoke damage was observed on the walls along the left-side of the front door. Along the  
17 topside of the interior wall, greater smoke damage was observed, specifically where the interior  
18 wall connected to the charred framing of the attic assembly.

19 Above the front stairs, wood framing from the attic was observed. The attic space sustained  
20 extensive fire damage as noted by the charred ceiling joists visible above the main entrance.

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1        **9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2        An alarm box was noted on the front wall of The Sub, located on the north corner of the building,  
3        adjacent to SDRS. Smoke and heat damage was observed on the exterior stucco assembly, which  
4        provided separation between both buildings.

5        A street vault for the gas utility was located on the sidewalk, located just north of SDRS. The top  
6        cover and access panel were found in a secured position during the investigation.

7        Note: According to City of San Luis Obispo records, Quality Fabrics was serviced by a gas meter  
8        located inside a street vault. The location of the gas meter, which provided utility service to SDRS  
9        was not accurately identified during the investigation due to building access.

10       Aerial footage for The Sub, SDRS, and the apartment located at 150 Pismo Street was obtained  
11       from SLOFD Truck-2.

12       In the southwest corner of The Sub, aerial footage showed extensive damage to the attic and the  
13       roof structure of the building. The service mast and weather head for the electrical utility service  
14       were noted above the building. The service drop, previously connected to the utility pole  
15       transformer had been removed. A white membrane structure which covered the rooftop  
16       assembly remained attached to the front parapet wall.

17       The roof structure above the Smoke Room had sustained extensive fire damage. Most of the  
18       structural wood framing inside the attic was found consumed by the fire. Of the few structural  
19       members that were not consumed, extensive charring was observed. The membrane structure  
20       on the rooftop had collapsed into the building, the majority of which was consumed during the  
21       fire.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 A fire pattern was observed on the inside of the front parapet wall, directly above the front display  
3 cabinet. The pattern extended approximately five or six series of wall studs in length.

4 Discoloration of the concrete was noted due to the effects of radiant heat and direct flame  
5 contact with the wall as the fire transitioned upward from the storefront display cabinet and into  
6 the attic.

7 The fire-rated wall which separated The Sub and SDRS has been noted in the photographic report.

8 Due to the accumulation of materials from the roof structure, aerial documentation did not  
9 provide accurate location to any penetrations of wall assemblies inside both buildings. For further  
10 background, review the witness statements provided in this report.

11 Aerial documentation also showed extensive fire damage to the attic and roof assembly of SDRS.

12 At the northwest corner of the property, the roof membrane structure had sustained extensive  
13 fire damage. The truss assembly associated with the attic was visible from the SLOFD Truck-2  
14 ladder, the majority of which was found consumed by the fire. A wood-framed storage platform  
15 was also noted on the north side of the building, adjacent to Quality Fabrics. The platform had  
16 sustained extensive fire damage; although a small horizontal component of the wood framing  
17 had not been entirely consumed.

18 A fire-rated wall which ran north to south has been noted in the photographic report. This  
19 masonry wall separated the property of 150 Pismo Street and SDRS.

20 The center region of the attic and roof assembly associated with 150 Pismo Street was found  
21 consumed during the fire as noted in the photographic report. Extensive fire damage to the  
22 interior contents and property was also observed inside this area.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 Inside the SDRS warehouse, a metal storage rack system was installed at the western end of the  
3 wall, as indicated in the photographic report. Most merchandise stored on the metal storage rack  
4 had been consumed during the fire, however, several boxes associated with the storage rack  
5 survived the fire. These boxes were located towards the center of the warehouse compartment  
6 as noted in the photographic report.

7 Two portable container trucks were located on the north end of the property. Both trucks were  
8 visible from the ladder of SLOFD Truck-2. Extensive fire damage was observed on the metal roof  
9 structure of both container trucks. The metal frame assembly was found ruptured in several  
10 locations on top of the trucks. Fire patterns were observed above several roof penetrations  
11 where smoke and radiant heat had ventilated during the fire.

12 On the back side of SDRS, a storage yard was visible from Pismo Street. Wood blocking associated  
13 with the metal security gate was found severed, to obtain entry during firefighting operations.  
14 The lock installed on the gate hasp was found in the locked position. The metal gate was found  
15 in an open position.

16 Inside the storage yard, several metal storage cabinets, plastic containers, household chemicals,  
17 sound amplifying equipment, and three portable storage container trucks were observed. Most  
18 property located inside the storage yard had not been damaged during the fire.

19 An opened overhead rolling door was observed towards the rear of the storage yard. The door  
20 opened up into the warehouse of SDRS. Collapsed wood framing associated with the attic was  
21 noted below the overhead rolling door. Extensive charring was observed on the wood framing.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE-FIRE SCENE EXAMINATION (CONTINUED)**

2 Outside the storage yard, the wood paneling to an exterior wall for SDRS was found breached. An  
3 interior view of the warehouse yielded extensive fire damage to the roof structure. The wood  
4 framing of the attic had been consumed during the fire.

5 Property such as cardboard and plastics were observed inside this compartment, stacked  
6 approximately four to six feet in height. Smoke and charring was observed on the top layers of  
7 cardboard as noted in the photographic report. A small pile of plastic compact disc cases was  
8 located on the ground within close proximity of this compartment. Minor discoloration due to  
9 smoke damage was observed on the compact disc cases.

10 Outside the storage yard, a notice had been posted at the main entrance to the apartment,  
11 located at 150 Pismo Street by the City Building Inspector. The posted order indicated that the  
12 building associated with the fire was unsafe to occupy. This notice was also posted at the  
13 following locations: The Sub, 295 Higuera Street, and SDRS, 303 Higuera Street.

14 On December 27, 2015 fencing was installed around the perimeter of the buildings associated  
15 with the fire. The fencing company was contacted by the property owner R. FERRIS to prevent  
16 unauthorized access into the buildings by the public and to safeguard the property associated  
17 with the fire. This action was completed at the request of the SLOFD.

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1        **9-NARRATIVE-INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS**

2        During the investigation process, access to the fire scene was limited in scope. Therefore, the  
3        conclusions documented in this report represent an analysis based solely upon the evidence  
4        which was collected.

5        The fire patterns observed, witness statements provided, and the photographic documentation  
6        examined indicate that the fire appeared to have originated inside or in close proximity to the  
7        front display cabinet of the Smoke Room, located inside The Sub. The cabinet was located in the  
8        northwest corner of the business, facing Higuera Street.

9        Due to building access, the exact area of fire origin could not be determined.

10       Inside the display cabinet, fuel sources such as the Star Lamp lighting fixtures and carpet flooring  
11       documented by store employees had been consumed during the fire. Analysis of these fuel  
12       sources inside the display cabinet post-fire could not be verified due unsafe conditions  
13       encountered and building access.

14       The plywood material which provided separation between the display cabinet and the Smoke  
15       Room had sustained extensive fire damage. As the fire developed and grew in size, this material  
16       may have acted as a source of fuel for the fire. Penetrations of the plywood due to direct flame  
17       contact were observed towards the center of the cabinet, exposing the interior of the Smoke  
18       Room.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**

2 Of the plywood which survived the fire, extensive charring was observed on the front side closest  
3 to the street. Charring was also documented on both sides of the wall studs located towards the  
4 center of the display cabinet. Although the amount of time that these materials burned cannot  
5 be accurately determined based upon the depth or amount of char alone, the direction of fire  
6 spread should be considered. Char observed on both sides of the wall studs should merit further  
7 consideration when examining the direction of the fire spread. As the fire grew in size, the fire  
8 likely traveled within this compartment in an upward direction toward the attic space.

9 As noted in the photographic report, conventional fire-blocking between wall studs was absent  
10 from the front display cabinet. This evidence is supported by the statements provided by R.  
11 FERRIS, the co-owner of SDRS. While the absence of conventional fire blocking does not  
12 accurately identify the exact area of fire origin, it does merit further consideration into the  
13 direction and rate of fire spread.

14 As previously mentioned, fire blocking is a component of building construction that is designed to  
15 prevent the passage of flame to other areas inside the building through concealed spaces.

16 Without fire blocking, the fire observed by witnesses and SLOFD personnel reported to be  
17 extending out of the broken display cabinet windows may have been provided with an  
18 unimpeded path to the attic space above.

19 This condition would also support the statements provided by several SLOFD personnel that  
20 pressurized black smoke and heavy fire was observed in the attic space and on the interior ceiling  
21 inside The Sub during fire suppression operations. Therefore, the absence of fire blocking inside  
22 the wall space behind the display cabinet may have played a significant role during the growth  
23 stage of fire development.

**1 9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**

2 Damage and discoloration to the exterior wall directly outside the display cabinet was noted in  
3 both corners, just below the top of the cabinet. This condition was probably caused by the  
4 prolonged effects of radiant heat and direct flame contact during ventilation of the cabinet once  
5 the display glass had been broken.

6 Aerial photographs obtained during the investigation indicated partial structural collapse of the  
7 parapet wall, located directly above the Smoke Room. Fire patterns observed above the  
8 storefront display cabinet reflect the consumption of the wood framing associated with the attic  
9 and roof membrane structure. The parapet wall was discolored, likely due to heat damage  
10 associated with fire growth as the fire transitioned from the display cabinet into the attic.

11 Since I was unable to safely perform an interior investigation due to unsafe conditions  
12 encountered following the fire, I was unable to accurately identify the mechanism which  
13 contributed to fire growth between both buildings.

14 However, statements documented by the building owner R. FERRIS, suggest that some type or  
15 degree of wall penetration existed between both buildings. During the investigation, R. FERRIS  
16 provided reference to an "opening" between the "main-wall" which separated The Sub from  
17 SDRS. For further reference to these statements, please review the supplemental attachments  
18 included in this report.

19 Whether or not this wall penetration aided in the spread of the fire growth during the combustion  
20 process could not be verified without interior access to The Sub. Aerial footage obtained during  
21 the investigation did not provide an accurate analysis of firewall penetrations, and or, their  
22 respective locations due to the volume of collapsed roof materials and property which blocked  
23 visual inspection.

1       **9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**

2       The consumption of fuels within the attic of both buildings provides evidence that the fire  
3       consumed the attic storage and structural wood framing prior to the consumption of building  
4       merchandise and other property, located at the floor level of both buildings.

5       Statements provided by SLOFD personnel assigned to interior salvage operations during the fire  
6       indicate that “heavy fuel loading” was present inside the storage racks, located above the main  
7       floor in certain sections of SDRS.

8       Although not initially present, heavy smoke conditions were eventually reported inside SDRS by  
9       SLOFD personnel. These conditions occurred sometime after conducting an initial interior search  
10      of the building and following several trips inside the building in order to retrieve computer  
11      equipment for store employees.

12     As the fire consumed fuels inside the attic of SDRS, fire growth was contained inside the firewall  
13     which separated Quality Fabrics from SDRS. Based upon visible observation, the firewall between  
14     Quality Fabrics and SDRS was found in a structurally sound condition, one free of any breaches,  
15     portals, or penetrations.

16     During the investigation process, several factors were identified that may have contributed to the  
17     cause and development of the fire inside The Sub.

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1        **9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**2        *Electrical Energy as a possible source of ignition:*

3        Witness statements provided by store employees demonstrate inconsistent findings. In  
4        statements provided by two store employees, the building experienced some history of electrical  
5        problems prior to the fire. In contrast, statements provided by two long-term store employees  
6        indicate that the building did not have any prior history of electrical problems. For further  
7        background, review the witness statements provided in this report.

8        The statements provided by one witness reflect that something appeared to be glowing in the  
9        front display window, just prior to the fire. Although this statement may not be supported by  
10       photographic evidence, it does provide further background regarding events that may have  
11       occurred just prior to when the fire was first reported to store employees.

12       The display cabinet located at the front of the Smoke Room had multiple Star Lamp lighting  
13       fixtures installed. During the investigation process, a description was provided about the lighting  
14       configuration and electrical power rating of these appliances by store employees and the  
15       property owner. The lamp shade materials associated with the lighting fixtures were not  
16       discovered during the investigation process.

17       However, the possibility of the lighting fixture being a competent heat source, one capable of heat  
18       transfer to the lamp shade material under abnormal electrical conditions such as resistance  
19       heating or under conditions of excessive current cannot be dismissed as a potential ignition  
20       source.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**

2 An orange extension cord was found plugged into an undetermined electrical appliance on the  
3 inside of the overhang assembly. Although temporary electrical wiring was noted, the extension  
4 cord was found in the unplugged position.

5 Above the extension cord, exposed electrical wiring was noted on the underside of the overhang  
6 assembly, located outside the main of entrance of the store. The outer sheathing of the cable had  
7 been consumed during the fire, and the point of connection of the wiring into the building was  
8 not determined.

9 From the sections of the wiring that could be safely examined during the investigation process,  
10 no evidence of arcing, resistance heating, or other sources of electrical failure capable of  
11 producing heat transfer to the nearby wood materials were identified. Although heavy charring  
12 was observed on the wood directly above the wiring, the orientation and the condition of the  
13 wiring below the wood suggests that the outer sheathing of the stranded wiring may have melted  
14 during the fire due to direct flame contact.

15 Conversely, consideration should also be given to other potential sources of electrical energy  
16 which may have existed inside the Smoke Room that were not examined during the investigation  
17 process. Electrical wiring which provided power to lighting fixtures and receptacle outlets inside  
18 the Smoke Room and throughout the building could not be safely examined due to unsafe  
19 conditions and building access.

20 Consequently, ignition by electrical energy inside or in close proximity to the area of fire origin  
21 cannot be dismissed as a potential ignition source and consequently as a potential cause for the  
22 fire.

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1        **9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**2        *Flammable gas containers, a contributing factor to fire development:*

3        The Smoke Room, according to witness statements was used to store small amounts of butane  
4        for smoking related accessories. The butane was stored on the opposite end of the Smoke Room,  
5        inside a glass counter display.

6        Although referenced by several store employees, the presence of the butane inside the Smoke  
7        Room under the conditions by which it was reported to have been stored does not provide  
8        sufficient evidence to suggest that the flammable gas was a contributing factor during the initial  
9        stages of fire development.

10       Unless further evidence is obtained which indicates that the butane canisters had become  
11       ruptured and or tampered inside the Smoke Room, or that they were actually stored in close  
12       proximity to the area of origin, it is unlikely that this flammable gas storage was a contributing  
13       factor.

14       The gas storage would have had to exist in an abnormal condition, one within the flammable  
15       range limits of the gas, and one capable of supporting combustion if introduced to a competent  
16       ignition source such as an electrical arc or an open flame.

17       In contrast, the presence of this material was documented on several accounts by different  
18       witnesses. Without interior access to verify the location, the position of orientation, conditions  
19       of access, and several other factors listed above, these conditions could not be verified.

20       Therefore, the butane gas canister storage could not be dismissed as a contributing factor in the  
21       initial fire development.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)****2 *Human Contributions to potential sources of ignition:***

**3** Prior to the fire being reported, witness statements provided by WATSON and SALINAS indicate  
**4** that an unidentified individual entered SDRS and informed both employees that the building next  
**5** door had been compromised.

**6** Although these statements were documented by both employees, it remains unclear what was  
**7** implied by these remarks. No additional evidence was obtained during the investigation process  
**8** that would link this individual of interest to either the cause or the origin of the fire.

**9** However, any potential involvement or prior knowledge that this individual may have had about  
**10** the fire cannot be dismissed without additional information to provide further detail into why he  
**11** was reported on the property, and why he was reported to have stated what he said to both  
**12** employees.

**13** Absent further evidence, his potential involvement in the cause of the fire cannot be dismissed.

**14** As indicated by several employees of The Sub, a customer was reported to be inside the Smoke  
**15** Room, just prior to when the fire was recorded as being observed. The statements provided by  
**16** two employees, LASSLET and MONTAGNA record that this individual notified them that there was  
**17** a fire inside the building.

**18** Furthermore, MONTAGNA also recalled that the customer inside the Smoke Room remained  
**19** on scene at the fire until the early afternoon hours.

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**1 9-NARRATIVE- INVESTIGATION OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS (CONTINUED)**

2 In contrast, video footage obtained during the investigation process suggests that this individual  
3 may have left the scene of the fire sometime during the first hour of the incident. His presence  
4 was not recognized nor was it pointed out to SLOFD or SLOPD personnel who were already  
5 committed to fire suppression operations and other various scene safety measures.

6 Therefore, any possible knowledge he had regarding the sequence of events leading up to the fire  
7 was not accurately recorded during the investigation.

8 Although no evidence was obtained during the investigation which linked this individual to the  
9 cause of the fire, his presence inside the Smoke Room at the time when the fire was first reported  
10 merits further consideration.

11 Without additional evidence, his potential involvement in the sequence of events leading up to,  
12 or his potential contributions to the cause of the fire cannot be dismissed.

13 While consideration has been given to several potential factors that may have contributed to the  
14 cause of the fire, each one of these factors could not be eliminated or validated without the  
15 ability to conduct a comprehensive interior investigation of the fire scene, and consequently  
16 obtain additional evidence.


17 Therefore, an ignition sequence explaining how the fuel(s) of first ignition and the source of  
18 ignition were introduced could not be accurately determined. As a result, an opinion could not  
19 be rendered regarding the potential cause of the fire.

20 In summary, absent further evidence, the cause of this fire is undetermined.

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