



OFFICE OF  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

August 12, 1975

REPLY TO:  
OLYMPIA OFFICE  
INSURANCE BUILDING  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98504  
753-3605, AREA CODE 206

Paul Barcliff, Detective  
Thurston County Sheriff's Office  
Court House  
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: SFM 75-242 - RESTOVER TRUCK STOP Fire - July 15, 1975

Dear Mr. Barcliff:

Enclosed is a copy of the investigation report on the captioned incident.

If we can be of further service on this matter, please advise.

Sincerely,

RON BROWN, CHIEF  
Fire Science & Investigation

*Lloyd G. Scott*  
LLOYD G. SCOTT  
Supervisor of Fire Investigation

LGS:lrj  
enclosure

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STATE OF WASHINGTON  
OFFICE OF  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

REPLY TO:  
**73-17592-12**  
INSURANCE BUILDING  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON 98504  
753-3605, AREA CODE 206

INVESTIGATION REPORT

Title of case TRUCK STOP - William Cosden, Sr. (Owner) File No. SFM 75-242  
Date of fire July 15, 1975 at 5:06 P.M. Investigated by L. G. Scott  
Location Interstate Hiway #5 & Lathrop Rd., Mailing Address, P.O. Box 5, Olympia Thurston  
(street) (city) (county)  
Owner William Cosden, Sr. dba "Truck Stop" Occupant Same

Insurance Company	Policy No.	Effective Dates	Coverage	Amount
Maryland Casualty	41-24-0162	10/1/73-76	Fire & extended loss - on this small bldg.	\$2,000

Previous fire record None in Olympia Files (William Cosden, Jr. has had 3 prior fires)

Loss payable to Stewart Inv. Co., 4646 - 40 S.W., Washington D.C.

Recent increases, changes None

Agent Olympia Insurance Brokers (Don Newbold) 315 E. 5th, Olympia 352-7676

Adjuster None assigned

Property involved Pump and steam cleaner shed

Where fire started In two places

Probable cause Incendiary

Extent of damage \$100 - \$200

Injuries or deaths None

Final disposition of case Open pending follow-up investigation

Details THE BUILDING

The building involved in this fire was a small one story frame, no basement machinery building. It was used to house pumping machinery, an air compressor, and a steam generator. This equipment was used in cleaning large trucks, sem-

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THE INVESTIGATION

8:45 a.m., July 16, 1975, contact was made with Ray Jensen, Fire Marshal, Thurston County Fire District #11, who assisted in the initial investigation.

8:50 a.m., July 16, 1975. William Cosden, Jr., Route 4, 2710 - 114th Way S.W., Olympia, telephone 943-7428, was interviewed at the main building of the "Restover Truck Stop." He stated that he runs the truck washing equipment. He said that when he found the fire, it was burning "pretty good." He indicated some propane was burning, too. He stated further that he knocked a portable propane heater off a small platform at the west end of the building, during the extinguishment of the fire. He had called to the main building for assistance and the fire department was called from there.

Cosden indicated that he was suspicious of an employee who had been fired for stealing or possibly a friend of this ex-employee. He further stated that this person had been last seen at the location on the day he was fired, but that his friend was seen there about 3:30 p.m. on the day of the fire.

9:15 a.m., July 16, 1975. William Cosden, Sr., Route 18, Box 265A, Olympia; telephone 943-4754, was also interviewed at the main building offices. At this point in time, the investigation of the fire scene had not been started. Cosden said that the fire was probably the result of some sort of spontaneous ignition.

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location on a table and placed thereto add to the fuel.

The copper line was examined and the break in the line appeared to be an old one. An accurate determination of this proved to be difficult because of the dust from the dry chemical extinguisher. As much of this as possible was removed by blowing it off prior to the examination. A shut-off valve was located on this line between the break and where the line penetrated the wall of the building. This valve was found in the "off" position. The copper line was pointed at the wall and a fan shaped pattern extended from this point upward towards the window. The window was stained and cracked, due to the heat from this fire.

The second fire was on the back or south wall of the building. This fire had been lit in some rain wear used by employees while washing the trucks. The remains from these clothes had fallen from their usual position to the floor. This was close to the propane piping for the steam generator. This piping was examined for leaks and none were found. This was done by smelling next to each joint. Propane has an odorizing agent added to it to assist in determining the presence of leaked propane.

After the examination of the fire scene, Joe Waterhouse was contacted again. He was asked if the portable propane heater were on the small platform. He stated that the heater had been disconnected for sometime and was on the floor, not on the platform.

William Cosden, Jr. was also again contacted. He repeated his story that

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## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

Title RESTOVER TRUCK STOP

File // SPM 75-242

County ThurstonDate of Incident 7/15/75Date of this Report 7/23/75By L. G. Scott

Investigator

Item No.	Description
1.	Northwest corner of the building. Note the small window on the west side of the building. This window was cracked and damaged by fire from one of the sets.
2.	North side of the building. Note the sliding door which is the only door in the building.
3.	Rear of the building. Note there are no openings on this side of the structure.
4.	East side of the building. Also shows the large propane tank supplying fuel for the equipment used.
5.	Gauge on the propane tank showing tank is partly full.
6.	Small platform on the inside of the building along the west wall. Note the copper propane line pointed at the wall adjacent to the burned area. Also note the remains of the phone book below and to the left of the above burned area.
7.	Closer view of the burned phone book.
8.	View of the copper line and the fan shaped pattern adjacent thereto.
9.	Close-up of the valve on the propane line shown in #6 and #8.
10.	Remains of rain clothing ignited in set #2. Piping at upper right is for the steam generator. A match and matchbook were found on the floor adjacent to the remains of the clothing. The matchbook was one advertising the same truck stop.
11.	Another view of the set shown in photo #10.
12.	View above that shown in photo #10 and #11.
13.	View above that shown in photos #10, #11 and #12.
14.	Closer view of the piping shown in #10.

LGS:lrj

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trailer and truck and trailer equipment. The cleaning rack was equipped with movable, power operated, nylon bristled, cleaning brushes. These rotated along the sides and top of the trucks while water, detergents and acid baths were sprayed from nozzles under pressure onto the sides and top of the truck bodies.

The inside of the building, which stood just to the south of the rack, held the aforementioned machinery, as well as the electric switches and controls which are located as shown on the diagram which is a part of this report.

Heat for the steam generator, used in cleaning the truck engines, was by propane fed from a tank outside the building along the east side. The piping entered the building through the south wall. A second line entered the building through the west wall.

#### THE FIRE

The fire was discovered by William Cosden, Jr. The fire was pretty much knocked down with a dry chemical extinguisher, but the local fire department was called in to finish the final extinguishment. During the fire department operations, they observed the presence of two (2) separate, non-connected fires. This indicated the fires to be incendiary in origin. Due to this, the building was locked securely and the office of the State Fire Marshal was called at 9:27 p.m., July 15, 1975. A request was made at that time for an investigation to be made the next day.

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9:35 a.m., July 16, 1975. Joe Beauchene, 1227 Eskridge Boulevard, Olympia, Telephone #357-6185 and Joseph A. Waterhouse, Sr., 1525 Oberhouse Road, Olympia, telephone 866-8209, were interviewed at the same location. They indicated that no one had locked the involved building prior to the fire. It had been found locked by William Cosden, Jr.

10:00 a.m., July 16, 1975. Investigation of the fire scene was started. William Cosden, Sr., Beauchene, Waterhouse and Ray Jensen all were present during the initial phase of the investigation. Photographs of both the exterior and interior were taken prior to moving anything. Shortly after the investigation was started, the insurance agent, Mr. Don Newbold of Olympia Insurance Brokers, appeared on the scene.

After an examination of the scene, it became the consensus of opinion of all present, including William Cosden, Sr., that the fire was incendiary in origin. The investigation showed the two fires to be separated by about 10 feet. In addition to the distance, a large steel tank for the steam generator was located between the two fires. This eliminated any remote possibility that a second fire might have been started by radiant heat.

One of the fires was located just above a small platform on the west side of the building. A copper propane line came through the wall below this platform and was bent upwards towards the severely burned area of the wall. On the floor to the left of the platform, the remains of a totally burned telephone book were found. A stain along the left 2x4 of the platform indicated that the telephone book had been taken from its normal

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location on a table and placed there to add to the fuel.

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After the examination of the fire scene, Joe Waterhouse was contacted again. He was asked if the portable propane heater were on the small platform. He stated that the heater had been disconnected for sometime and was on the floor, not on the platform.

William Cosden, Jr. was also again contacted. He repeated his story that

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he had knocked the heater from the platform. He said he might have broken the copper line when he did this.

3:47 p.m., July 16, 1975. A routine check was made through the files to see if any prior fires had occurred at this location. None were found. The name "William Cosden, Jr." does appear in the files under investigation #SFM 74-147, dated April 15, 1974. This fire was found to be of "undetermined origin." The report also indicates that Cosden had a fire in a pick up truck with an insured loss of \$3,935 on 11/26/73 and a bathroom fire on 1/29/74 with an insured loss of \$1,600. The fire #74-147 involved the total loss of Cosden's residence.

Background checks were made through the Thurston County Sheriff's office and the information is included in the confidential section of the report.

#### CONCLUSIONS

This fire was found to be incendiary in origin and was set in two places. All possible accidental causes were eliminated by a methodical investigation. This case will be held open during the investigation of possible suspects and their motives.

LGS:lrj  
7/23/75

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