



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE**  
**Office of the Fire Marshal**



**FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**INCIDENT LOCATION:** 150 West street      **Type:** Auto ☐ Structure X Other ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE & TIME:** 05-05-2019

**ALARM #** 19-9010330      Still ☐ Box ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm X 3<sup>rd</sup> Alarm ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> Alarm ☐

**NHPD CN #** 19-16970      **STATE POLICE CN #**

**911 NOTIFICATION MEANS:** Private Caller

<b>AGENCIES NOTIFIED</b>	<b>STATE FMO</b>	<b>Bldg X</b>	<b>Health <input type="checkbox"/></b>	<b>LCI X</b>	<b>Red Cross X</b> # Adults 14 # Children 0	<b>H<sub>2</sub>O <input type="checkbox"/></b>	<b>Gas X</b>	<b>UI X</b>
ON SCENE	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X

**INVESTIGATOR:** Jerry M Rynich      **Contact #** (203) 946 -7656

**NHPD on Scene:** Yes

**SUPPRESSION RESOURCES**

**INCIDENT COMMANDER:** Chief Alston

**FIRST IN ENGINE COMPANY:** Engine 11      **FIRST IN ENGINE OFFICER:**  
LT Vega

**FIRST IN TRUCK COMPANY:** Truck -2      **FIRST IN TRUCK OFFICER:**  
Captain Reynolds

<b>INJURIES:</b>	<b>CIVILIAN</b> Yes 02 Total	<b>FIREFIGHTER</b> YES 03 Total
<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>CIVILIAN</b> Yes 02 Total	

**SCENE SECURED BY (PRIOR TO INVESTIGATION):** NHFD

**SCENE SECURED BY (AFTER INVESTIGATION):** NHPD

**PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION**

**PROPERTY OWNER:** John Farrar

**Consent Form Signed:** Yes

**Search Warrant:** Yes

**PROPERTY OWNER PHONE #:** (      )      -

**PROPERTY OWNERS ADDRESS:**

**INSURANCE COMPANY:** State Farm



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INSURANCE POLICY # \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONS INVOLVED** See Attached

PERSONS INVOLVED	OWNER	OCC	FL	D.O. B	AGE	PHONE	RED CROSS	RENT INSUR.	INJURED
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**STRUCTURE/AUTO DESCRIPTION**

Two and a half family wood frame structure with full basement and walk-up attic space.

**EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR EXAMINATIONS**

**EXTERIOR EXAMINATION**

#1 SIDE (FRONT): See Narrative

#2 SIDE (LEFT SIDE): See Narrative

#3 SIDE (REAR): See Narrative

#4 SIDE (RIGHT SIDE): See Narrative

**INTERIOR EXAMINATION**

**BASEMENT:** See Narrative

**FIRST FLOOR:** See Narrative

**SECOND FLOOR:** See Narrative

**THIRD FLOOR:** See Narrative

**ATTIC:** See Narrative

**ELECTRICAL SERVICE:** See Narrative

**MECHANICALS:** See Narrative

**FIRE ALARM SYSTEM PRESENT**

Yes ☐ No ☒ 1<sup>st</sup> ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> ☐ Basement ☐ Attic ☐

**FIRE ALARM SYSTEM OPERATIONAL**

Yes ☐ No ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> ☐ Basement ☐ Attic ☐  
n/a ☒

**SMOKE DETECTORS PRESENT**

Yes ☒ No ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> ☐ Basement ☐ Attic ☐

**SMOKE DETECTORS OPERATIONAL**

Yes ☐ No ☐ 1<sup>st</sup> ☐ 2<sup>nd</sup> ☐ 3<sup>rd</sup> ☐ 4<sup>th</sup> ☐ Basement ☐ Attic ☐  
U/K ☒



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**WEATHER**

See Attached.

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**INCIDENT SUMMARY:**

This was a two and a half family home with illegal bedrooms located on the third floor. Two residents died in this fire; believed to be located on the third floor up until the time of death.

Three firefighters were injured. The area of origin of the fire, appears to be in the second-floor kitchen. The fire has been ruled undetermined pending further investigation in cooperation with the CT State Police, CT Fire Marshal's office and the NHPD.

**SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION:** To determine the origin and cause of a fire.

**WITNESSES:** See narrative

**AREA OF ORIGIN:** The second-floor kitchen

**FLAME SPREAD:**

See Narrative

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS:**

On May 5th, 2019 at approximately 0330 hours, I, Investigator Jerry M Rynich who is a n assigned member of the New Haven Fire Investigation Unit was requested and responded to 150 West Street to determine the origin and cause of a structure fire. Upon arrival this investigator was met by Fire Marshal Robert Doyle and Senior Fire Investigator Ray Saracco. Senior Fire Investigator Ray Saracco ordered this investigator to hold the scene and to begin interviewing witnesses from this fire.

Fire Marshal Robert Doyle and Senior Fire Investigator Ray Saracco left the scene in attempt to interview the residents taken to Yale New Haven hospital by emergency crews. This investigator met with NHPD officer Patrolman Paxton who stated he was writing the initial report and advised this investigator that the residents of the house were across the street.

This investigator was then met by Car 39 Operations Chief Vendetto who stated the structure was a two and half family wood with bedrooms on the third floor and no second means of egress. Chief Vendetto stated that most of the doors within the property have dead bolt locks and some were found to have pad locks. Chief Vendetto was informed by this investigator, that, per order of the Fire Marshal's office and the New Haven Police Department, from this time forward, no firefighting personnel would be permitted to enter the property unless continued fire suppression was required.



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This investigator then walked across the street and met with the tenants of 150 West Street. This investigator was met by first floor tenant Mr. Rontae Hunter. Mr. Hunter states he was sleeping. He woke up to a flashlight in his face and was pretty sure it was the fire department. Mr. Hunter stated someone said, "get up, get up, the house is on fire". He woke up his wife. He could smell smoke coming from the back hallway." Yes, I'm on the first floor" Ms. Brice, Mr. Hunter's wife stated" Mr. Hunter stated he had heard arguing up on the second floor earlier that night and said he was pretty sure it was the people on the second floor. He went to bed and then was woken up by someone yelling "fire", but he was not sure who it was.

The first- floor tenant, Mr. Hassan Hallett stated he was sleeping and heard banging on the window and someone yelling "get out"! He believes it was probably the "crack heads" upstairs that started the fire. A full statement for Mr. Hallett was taken later by Detective Michael Torre of NHPD inside the FIU van.

Mrs. Dershaya Hargrove, Mr. Hallett's wife, stated she heard banging on the window and someone yelling "fire, fire"! When she came outside, she could see the fire and smoke coming from the second-floor window.

(Ms. Hargrove identified the window with fire and smoke as being on the second floor located on the north side kitchen area of the property).

She stated the "crack heads" were trying to wake them up. She remembered seeing fire on the roof as well, right above that window. When she got outside, she looked at the stairs going to the second floor and saw they were on fire. She stated this was like maybe five seconds after she got out. She went around back, and saw a woman lying face down in the yard. She didn't see any blood and no broken bones. She stated she thinks the people on the third floor were the first ones out.

At that time this investigator was met by Mr. Reginald McCoy. Mr. Mc Coy stated he was sleeping on the first floor at the front of the house. He was sleeping, then heard a "boom, boom". He came out front and saw fire up on the second floor. He believed it was coming from the kitchen. He stated they have a kitchen on the first floor too. He said everybody gets to use the kitchen; guys on the first floor use theirs and people on the second use their own.

Mr. Onix Ortiz and Crystal Luzzi approached this investigator. Mr. Ortiz stated he was up on the third floor with his wife Crystal. They reside in the middle bedroom. They got out by jumping out the front window. They were listening to music and could smell burning. The guy in the front room yelled "fire". He and Crystal ran into the room. Crystal tried to find out where the smoke was coming from.

Ms. Luzzi stated she saw smoke coming from the heat register and saw the stairs were filled with smoke. She jumped out the window at the front of the house with Onix. Mr. Ortiz stated that the guys in the front room are Michael, Corey and the "skinny dude" (name unknown). He stated



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there is a lady who lives in the back bedroom, but he doesn't know her and doesn't know if she has any family. He stated he doesn't think there is a smoke detector in their bedroom.

Upon completion of interviews of the tenants who reside at 150 West Street, this investigator met with NHPD Detective Torre.

Detective Paul Makuc Connecticut State Police arrived on scene and Senior Fire Investigator Ray Saracco and Fire Marshal Robert Doyle returned to the scene. Having found that the two tenants transported to Yale New Haven Hospital had died it was decided that a definite confirmation of the deceased' identity needed to be established.

This investigator, Fire Marshal Robert Doyle, Connecticut State Police Detective Paul Makuc and Senior Fire Investigator Ray Saracco entered the property and ascended to the third floor. All investigators entered the east side bedroom where Mr. Reed and Mr. Randall are believed to have occupied up to the time of death. A hospital folder and wallet were found along the interior south side wall identifying Mr. Randall. No identification for Mr. Reed was found. At this time all investigators exited the room and returned to the FIU van. At this time, exigency is believed to have expired, therefore it was decided that an administrative warrant needed to be secured before further investigation within the property could continue. Detective Torre and Detective Makuc began to author the warrant affidavit.

This investigator, along with Fire Marshal Robert Doyle exited the FIU van and began to photograph the exterior of the property. This investigator took the photographs while Fire Marshal Robert Doyle recorded the photolog. This investigator photographed the property beginning with the front and moving in a systematic clockwise pattern around the whole exterior of the property.

Beginning with the east side (front of property), first floor exterior, the windows were found to be intact. No evidence of smoke staining was present. The property was properly addressed as 150 West street. The porch and structural columns were found intact, with no fire damage noted. The glass in the second- floor windows had been removed and the window frames appeared to be intact.

Continuing in a clockwise pattern, the south side (left side) of the property exhibited that the first- floor window's glass was intact. There was no evidence of smoke staining present. The window frames appeared to be intact. Moving along the south side of the property toward the rear, three electrical meters (which were affixed to the south wall) were found removed from their respective bases. The meters were found on the ground underneath the bases. One gas meter was found attached to piping leading into the property. The second and third gas meters appear to have been removed prior to arrival. The second-floor windows located on the middle wall exhibited that the glass had been removed. The window frames sustained fire and smoke damage, which was comparatively heavier at their top portions and consistent with venting of products of combustion from within the structure. Smoke staining was present around the exterior window edges of both windows. The small two paned window at the southwest corner of this side was found to have had the glass removed from both panes. No fire damage was observed around the exterior of this window.



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The west side rear of the property was found to be littered with debris. Various building materials, piping and buckets were observed. The bilco doors to the basement were found open. A chain and pad lock were found hanging on the interior of the right door. The first- floor windows appeared to be intact with no evidence of smoke staining. The back in-swing door leading to the rear hallway was found open. The second- floor window above the debris was found to have the glass removed. The frame was observed to be intact. There was evidence of a possible doorway or, window previously installed on the west wall right corner. That area was found to have been covered over prior to arrival. The third- floor window was found to have the glass removed. The window frame was observed to be intact.

Continuing around the exterior of the property, the north side was examined and photographed. The first- floor rear exhibited a single window that was intact with no smoke staining present. An air conditioning unit was observed mounted in the lower half of the window the second-floor windows both exhibited fire damage to the top areas consistent with venting of products of combustion from within the structure. The window directly above the first-floor window with the air conditioning unit exhibited heavier smoke and fire damage when compared to the window next to it. The vinyl siding around that window also suffered heavier smoke and fire damage when compared to the other window. The two windows at the middle exterior wall first and second floors appeared to have been covered over prior to Fire Department arrival.

The window located on the first floor near the southeast corner was intact with no evidence of smoke staining present. The two second- floor windows closest to the east side exhibited fire damage and smoke staining consistent with venting of products of combustion from within the structure. Charring was observed on the top and lower portion of the windows. The glass had been removed from both windows. The vinyl siding around both windows sustained fire and smoke damage exposing the wood frames. The most damage was noted to top the window frames extending to the roof line.

No windows were present at the third-floor north side of the property. A single skylight was found in place. The skylight was located over the middle bedroom of the third floor occupied by Mr. Ortiz and Ms. Luzzi. The framework appeared to have sustained fire and smoke damage. Smoke staining was present to the exterior frame.

Upon confirmation of the administrative warrant being secured This investigator and Fire Marshal Robert Doyle entered the property and began to photograph and examine the interior, beginning with the basement area. All floors were photographed systematically by this investigator while Fire Marshal Doyle completed a photo log.

#### **BASEMENT INTERIOR EXAMINATION**

This investigator and Fire Marshal Doyle entered the basement from the west side rear of the property through the bilco doors in the center of the basement. Upon entering a brick structure extending into the ceiling was found to have been unaffected by fire and smoke damage.



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Several support columns adjacent to the brick structure were also found to have been unaffected by smoke and fire damage. It was discovered by this investigator that they had been painted black prior to arrival of fire department personnel. Continuing through the basement, the stairs leading to the first- floor hallway was found intact. The stairs were located on the south side wall of the property. The basement door leading to the first- floor hallway located at the top of this staircase was found intact and attached to the frame.

This investigator returned to the basement and, upon further investigation, a hot water heater was found located in the center of the basement. It was observed to be intact with no smoke or fire damage present. The east side wall (which appeared to be part of the foundation and constructed of cinder block) was found intact with no smoke or, fire damage noted. The beams located along the north side ceiling exhibited evidence of water seepage from fire department suppression activities. The electrical panels were found on the south side wall. All three panels were photographed. The panels were observed to be intact. The doors to the panels were found still attached to the base and were in the open position.

The breakers to the house panel were found in the "off" position. The breakers in the center panel were found to be in the "on" position. The last panel on the right appears to have several breakers in the midline or "tripped" position.

Moving back to the center of the basement, a single boiler/furnace was observed. The boiler/furnace was observed to be intact with no evidence of smoke or fire damage. The boiler was photographed from three sides. It is unknown if any of the utilities were in use at the time of the fire.

A smoke detector plate was found mounted on the beams on the north side. No detector was found. Wiring was found dangling from the center of the wall mounted plate. The plate and beam were found to be painted black as well.

A single window located on the north side wall was found to be covered with plywood. The window was found to have a single hole cut out in mid center. The plywood appeared to be held in place with non-fire rated foam.

A second staircase leading from the basement to the first floor was found along the north side wall. The doorknob was missing from this door. Water seepage was present along the framework.

Upon returning to the basement floor, exposed junction boxes and wiring were found along the north side beams. They were found in an open ceiling. Several wires were found sealed with black electricians' tape on the north side wall.

## FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR EXAMINATION



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Upon completion of the interior examination of the basement, Fire Marshal Robert Doyle and this investigator then exited through the bilco doors and entered the first-floor rear hallway through the back door.

A smoke detector was observed on the ceiling in the first- floor rear interior hallway. The battery door was found half open. No batteries were found. Water damage with multiple fractures to the ceiling was present. The floors, walls and interior staircase located along the south side wall were found intact.

Upon entering the hallway for the first- floor apartments from the rear hallway, it was noted that on the east side interior hallway wall, a mounting plate for a smoke detector was found in place. The smoke detector was found to be missing.

The rear bedroom on the west side of the first-floor sustained minor smoke and fire damage. A single smoke detector was found within the room along the wall above the dresser. The smoke detector was found to be painted over around the base and the wall plate. Fire Marshal Doyle and this investigator removed the detector from the wall. No batteries were found inside the detector. The smoke detector was also found to be past its expiration date. No wiring was present. Portions of the ceiling were found lining the floor of the hallway.

The bathroom had sustained minor smoke and fire damage. Sections of the ceiling above the bathtub had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations.

The center bedroom on the north side wall had sustained minor smoke and fire damage. Portions of the ceiling had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations. The door to enter the bedroom was partially blocked by a bed and dresser. A dead bolt lock was found installed in the door.

While walking into the kitchen area (heading east), a single smoke detector was found on the kitchen south side interior wall. The detector was removed from the wall by this investigator. The detector was found to be non-operational. The label indicating a turn off alarm option was found punctured.

The center bedroom along the south side wall was found to have sustained minor smoke and fire damage. A lighting fixture was found intact on the ceiling. A mounting plate for a smoke detector was found on the ceiling as well. No smoke detector could be located inside the room.

The first-floor kitchen sustained minor smoke and fire damage. All appliances were found intact. No damage to the cabinets, counter tops or fixtures was found.

Upon entering the first floor living room area, which had been arranged as sleeping quarters, a mounting plate for a smoke detector was found above the main doorway, while inside the room, a second mounting plate for a smoke detector was found above the door frame leading into the kitchen. No detectors for these mounting plates could be found in this room. The room and





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contents appeared to be unaffected by smoke or, fire damage. Ash and debris were present on the floor. It appeared the ash and debris had been carried over by firefighting personnel upon entering the apartment from the front east side interior hallway.

The door leading from the first- floor apartment to the main hallway was found to be properly mounted and capable of being closed. The door was found to have a dead bolt installed.

While standing in the main hallway, heavy fire damage was found to the interior staircase located along the north side wall extending to the second floor. Multiple piles of debris were found on the lower portion of the staircase and the area parallel to the first- floor apartments entrance. Building materials were observed leaning up against the west side interior wall. Plastic buckets were found lining the left side of an orange scooter. It would later be discovered that the scooter belongs to Mr. Bobby McCrea, who occupied the second- floor middle bedroom.

The basement door located on the north side wall under the staircase was blocked by the scooter and debris.

A single smoke detector was found on the south side interior hallway wall. The detector appeared to be intact. The detector had sustained smoke and fire damage to the right corner, resulting in deformity. The battery cover to the detector was removed by this investigator. A single nine-volt battery was found inside the detector.

The front inswing door located on the east hallway interior wall (used to enter and exit the property) was found to be intact and properly mounted.

#### SECOND FLOOR INTERIOR EXAMINATION

Investigators began to ascend into the second floor of the property using the staircase located along the north side wall. Smoke and fire damage, comparatively heavier than observed on the first floor, was noted to the top of the staircase's left-side banister, the second- floor landing and railings and the window located on the north side wall. Burnt debris was found on the stairs from the second-floor landing down to the ground floor.

A section of the ceiling located underneath the second- floor landing had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations. The left-side banister of the staircase and the landing had sustained significant fire damage. The portion of the railing installed on the landing was observed hanging over the gap between the staircase and hallway. The banister on the left side of the staircase was found still attached however, the top portion connecting the banister to the landing's railing had sustained fire damage. Pieces of the railing and banister were later found within the debris during the investigation.

The window located to the right of the staircase along the north wall had sustained significant fire and smoke damage. The interior of the frame exhibited heavy charring along all sides of the window. The north side wall exhibited heavy smoke and fire damage with charring observed.



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The interior finish had peeled away from the wall.

While standing in the second- floor kitchen area facing east this investigator photographed the entrance and living room area of the second floor located along the east side wall. Heavy smoke and fire damage were present. Portions of the walls and ceiling had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations. A recliner was found along the west interior wall, closest to the doorway, leading into the kitchen. The reclining chair had sustained significant smoke and fire damage to the top right portion. Debris were found on the seat of the chair. The glass from the windows within the living room area had been removed. The window framing was intact along the interior east side wall.

A bedroom doorway was located along the north side interior wall of the living room area. The bedroom sustained minor smoke and fire damage when compared to the living room. The windows inside the bedroom had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations. Window frames were found lining the south side interior wall of the bedroom. The ceiling inside the bedroom was found to have sustained minor smoke damage. Wiring was observed to be melted and hanging from the ceiling. A hole had been made by fire personnel to check for fire extension during overhaul operations. When exiting the bedroom, the door appeared to be intact and properly mounted. A dead bolt lock was found installed in the door.

This investigator exited the bedroom area and returned to living room area facing west. Portions of the west interior wall within the living room had been removed, exposing a brick column. The brick column appeared to be intact. Smoke staining was present.

As this investigator walked out of the living room area and into the second- floor kitchen, it was observed that sections of the interior south side wall inside the kitchen had been removed. The heaviest amount of damage to the kitchen was noted along the north side wall. The north side wall contained cabinets, appliances and counter tops, including a gas stove and microwave.

The microwave was found within the debris on the kitchen floor and was observed to have sustained smoke and fire damage. The microwave was mounted above the stove pre-fire (similar to the first -floor kitchen configuration).

The stove was found face down, exposing the gas line and an electrical receptacle. The receptacle was photographed and was found to have sustained only minor smoke staining to the exterior. The gas line appeared to be intact and was found still attached to the stove. The kitchen window to the right of the refrigerator had sustained significant smoke and fire damage. Burnt debris was found along the interior windowsill.

The middle bedroom located on the south side second floor interior wall across from the kitchen had sustained smoke and fire damage. The amount of damage was comparable to the amount found in the kitchen area. The room was filled with a large amount of debris. Some furniture was recognizable within the bedroom. The windows within the bedroom were found to have been damaged by fire. The ceiling and all four walls had been damaged by fire. Portions of the ceiling



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and wall had been removed by firefighting personnel during overhaul operations. An exposed junction box was found in the ceiling.

At this time this investigator exited the middle bedroom south side wall and walked down the hall facing west. A supply closet was found to have sustained heavy smoke and fire damage. The door had sustained heavy smoke and fire damage. Inside the supply closet burnt rags and plastic buckets of joint compound were observed. On the opposite wall, a cabinet was found along the north side interior wall. The top of the cabinet was found to have sustained charring and burnt debris was layered on top. The wall was found to have sustained heavy smoke and fire damage. Portions of the wall were found removed.

The ceiling above the hallway had been removed, exposing wood lath and support beams. Significant fire activity in the hallway area and the rooms themselves appear to have sustained damage consistent with the migration of the fire into the rooms. Starting from the kitchen and traveling down the hallway area. The damage appeared to be more severe to the upper portion of doorways and within the rooms.

The second- floor bathroom located on the north wall had sustained heavy smoke and fire damage to the upper portion of the door frame and door extending into the bathroom. The fixtures remained in place. The sink, bathtub and toilet were found covered with debris. The walls within the bathroom were found to be stained with smoke and damaged by fire; damage was heavier toward the top half of the room when compared to the bottom half.

The west side bedroom located on the second floor was found to have minor smoke and fire damage. The window frame was found intact, but the glass was found removed. There were several electrical outlets found within the bedroom. These outlets were found to be unaffected by smoke or fire. A smoke detector mounting plate was found inside the bedroom on the ceiling above the door. The exterior face of the door had significant and relatively even smoke and fire damage. Additionally, there was no damage to the hinge side edge of the door, indicating the door was closed at the time of the fire.

This investigator exited the bedroom and returned to the second- floor hallway. This investigator entered the second- floor rear interior hallway. Facing west and looking down the staircase leading to the rear exit of the property, a smoke detector was found on the ceiling. The detector was discolored and painted over in some sections. Damage to this hallway and stairwell area consisted of smoke damage. The door leading to the second-floor interior hallway had been closed during the fire.

### **THIRD FLOOR INTERIOR EXAMINATION**

Returning to the second- floor apartment interior hallway, this investigator began to ascend the staircase leading to the third- floor apartment. The ceiling above this hallway was found to be removed by firefighting personnel. Wiring and lath were found exposed. Burnt debris was noted on the staircase. A hole was found along the interior stairwell exposing a shaft within the wall.



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This area is believed to be the area which leads to the opening found on the west side second floor exterior, which was found covered over prior to arrival. As this investigator ascended the staircase to the third floor heading east, exposed wiring was observed at the ceiling leading up to the third floor.

The third-floor hallway connecting the front bedrooms and rear bedroom was photographed. Portions of the interior wall located on the south side had been removed by firefighting personnel. Personal belongings were found along the south side interior wall closest the east side bedroom.

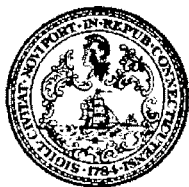
This investigator entered the rear bedroom located on the west side wall. Before making entry into the bedroom, along the wall outside, this investigator located a Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector on the ground. The CO detector had sustained smoke and fire damage. Upon entering the bedroom, smoke and fire damage was observed. The window frame was intact; however, the glass has been removed. Portions of the ceiling on the north wall had been removed by firefighting personnel. Exposed charred wiring was found in the ceiling above the doorway. The door was found to have a key operated lock in place.

This investigator returned to the third- floor hallway (facing north) and photographed the interior of the bathroom. The Fixtures were found in place. The walls had been removed during overhaul operations. Insulation was found throughout the bathroom interior. A cell phone was found inside the bathroom behind the door. The cell phone rang several times while conducting the investigation of this area. An item consistent with a fire damaged smoke detector was found in the hallway along the outside of the bathroom wall.

The middle bedroom was found to have moderate smoke and fire damage when compared to the rear bedroom on the west side. The sky light was found intact; however, the glass had been removed. The ceiling exhibited smoke damage with portions having been removed by firefighting personnel. A lighting fixture was found on the ceiling as well as a mounting plate for a smoke detector with charred wiring in place. The door to enter the bedroom was found to have a latch for a pad lock and a key operated lock as well.

The front bedroom (east side) also exhibited moderate smoke and fire damage when compared to the rear bedroom on the west side. The ceiling had portions removed by firefighting personnel. A lighting fixture was found in the center of the ceiling. A smoke detector which had been heavily damaged by fire and smoke was found in place on the ceiling as well. Debris and personal belongings were found along all four walls of the room. The single window located on the east side wall was found to have the frame intact. The glass had been removed. The walls on the south side had inspection holes in place, exposing the insulation. The door entering the bedroom was found to have a dead bolt lock installed.

Overall damage to the first and third floor was comparatively less than the second floor.



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From this point, based on the witness statements and fire scene examination, investigators focused their investigation on the second floor of the structure.

Investigators began to delayer the debris found on the front east interior stairwell. Investigators cleared the stairs of burnt debris working from the bottom of the staircase and working our way up towards the second- floor landing.

The bottom portion of the staircase was found to be intact, having suffered minor smoke and fire damage. The middle portion of the staircase, approximately the seventh step up shows moderate fire and smoke damage when compared to the bottom portion. The smoke and fire damage became more severe as this investigator walked up towards the second- floor landing and the entrance into the second- floor kitchen. The heaviest amount of damage was found at the top of staircase.

Upon stopping at the second floor landing the debris was de-layered. Portions of the railing and staircase banister were uncovered. While looking up towards the ceiling, comparatively heavy charring was observed on the beams above the second- floor landing and the staircase. As the investigators returned to de-layering the debris, what is believed to be carpet remnant and foam padding was found.

Connecticut State Police Detective. Paul Makuc and his K-9 partner "Cora" had been dispatched to the scene. "Cora" was deployed in the area of the aforementioned carpeting and padding. "Cora" did not alert. As the layers of debris were removed, the area was photographed.

Investigators continued the examination in the second- floor kitchen and began to carefully de-layer the debris found along the north side interior wall and south side interior wall. NHPD Detective Torre assisted with the de-layering. As the layers of debris were removed, the area was photographed. The stove was then lifted of its face and placed in its correct standing position.

The make model and serial number were found labeled in the front upper right portion of the stove. The label was photographed. The glass front and handle appeared to be intact. The knobs to control the burners could not be examined, as they were not found attached to the stove or within the debris during this investigation. All burner controls appeared to be set in the same direction. The oven was pulled away from the wall. The gas line and electrical outlet were then photographed, as well as the north side wall behind the stove.

The wooden cabinets within the kitchen were examined and found to have sustained relatively consistent fire damage, with damage being comparatively heavier at the mid and top portions. Investigators then began to de-layer the kitchen floor. While delayering the debris located along the south side interior wall, the backs consistent with two chairs were recovered. Remnants of a table could not be found.

Above the stove, the wooden cabinets that had been affixed over the microwave had been consumed. The joists above were exposed. Heavy charring with fire and smoke damage were



# CITY OF NEW HAVEN

## DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE

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found in comparison to the outside beams. There is a run of BX cable located above the stove. The portion of BX cable which is believed to have been covered by the ceiling at the time of the fire was found to have two deformities on the surface of the cable. The cable was photographed.

This portion of BX cable was found dangling above the right side of the stove from the ceiling. There were two electrical boxes found located to left and right of the stove area above the counter tops. The electrical boxes were photographed. The electrical boxes had sustained fire and smoke damage. The BX cable connected to these boxes was also photographed. An electrical box with Romex cable was found to the right of the stove above the kitchen counter. The electrical box had sustained smoke and fire damage consistent with radiating heat.

The Romex cable appeared to be intact with no evidence of arcing or failure. Charring was present at the connection where the Romex cable connected with the electrical box. At this time the kitchen counters were carefully de-layered of debris. The kitchen sink and surrounding countertop area were carefully cleared of debris as well. Various pots and pans were found. Remnants of food stock were found.

While de-layering the kitchen counter a remnant consistent with a towel was found. The remnant had sustained smoke and fire damage. Portions of the towel were found to be missing. The towel appeared to be burnt on three corners. One quarter of the towel remained intact having sustained only minor fire and smoke damage. Connecticut State Police K-9 "Cora" was deployed in the area of the towel. There were no alerts.

Based on the witness statements, fire patterns and fire dynamics, the area of origin of this fire was determined to be within the second-floor kitchen area. In adherence to the Scientific Method, after collection of data, various hypotheses in reference to heat producing or ignition scenarios were considered as plausible causes for the fire at 150 West Street, New Haven, Connecticut.

The following hypotheses of ignition scenarios were considered: Natural, Electrical, Incendiary and Accidental. No determination could be made. This investigator was unable to locate a competent ignition source or, a first fuel ignited. This case remains open pending further investigation.

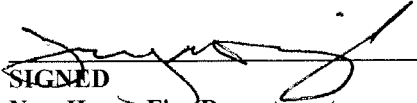
**CONCLUSION:** Based on the information gathered and the evidence available on the scene at the time of this investigation, this fire has been ruled as undetermined. This investigator was unable to locate an ignition source or a positive first fuel ignited. This case remains open, pending further investigation in cooperation with the NHPD CT State Police and CT Fire Marshal's office.

At the time of this report's submission, the status of the case is considered: **OPEN**



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE**  
**Office of the Fire Marshal**



  
**SIGNED**  
New Haven Fire Department  
Fire Marshal's Office  
Fire Investigation Unit

05-05-2019  
**DATE**

## Photographic Evidence Log

**Inspector:** Jerry M Rynich FM-7  
**Alarm#:** 19-9010330

**Location:** 150 West Street

**Date:** 05-05-19

**All photos were taken with:** X Nikon D5100 Digital Canon Rebel XT Digital

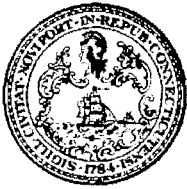
**All photographs show a true and accurate depiction of the fire scene located at: 150 West Street**

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Additional sheets attached Yes







**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE**  
**Office of the Fire Marshal**



## Photographic Evidence Log

**Inspector:** Jerry Rynich  
**Alarm#:** 19-10150

**Location:** 150 West Street

**Date:** 5/5/19

All photos were taken with: ☐ Nikon D5100 Digital ☒ Canon Rebel XT Digital  
All photographs show a true and accurate depiction of the fire scene located at: 150 West Street

1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor tenant information(Wallet)	26	Basement front wall
2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor tenant information (Wallet)	27	Basement left wall,, Electrical meters
3	Van call Information board	28	Far left Electrical meter (house) all off
4	Front of house (A side)	29	Mid Electrical meter (1st floor) all off
5	Number of house	30	Right Electrical metter (2 <sup>nd</sup> floor) some tripped
6	Left side of house. (B-side)	31	Right Electrical metter (closer view)
7	Left side of house (meters on ground)	32	Furnace view from front of building looking towards rear
8	Left side of house (meter locations)	33	Furnace in the off position
9	Left side of house 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor windows	34	furnace gas line on position
10	Left side of house Gas meter	35	Basement mid way smoke alarm missing
11	Left side of house 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor windows	36	Basement window on the right side
12	Left side of house 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor windows	37	Basement front stair to first floor
13	Rear of house, (C-side) debris	38	Basement front stair to first floor landing( there is no access to the first floor, has been closed off)
14	Rear of house entry	39	Basement ceiling junction box along the right wall
15	Rear of house Bilco door	40	Open junction box on the left rear wall in Basement
16	Rear of house looking towards 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	41	Taped wire in ceiling located in the rear of the Basement
17	Right side of house, (D side)	42	Rear stair entry to first floor
18	Right side of house, (D-side)	43	Rear hall smoke alarm
19	Right side of house (D-side)	44	Rear hall smoke alarm (closer view) no battery
20	Bilco door entry	45	Rear hall wall by entry, missing smoke alarm
21	Bilco door entry	46	First floor rear bedroom
22	Basement entry landing looking rear towards front	47	First floor rear bedroom (smoke alarm)
23	Basement stairs to first floor	48	First floor rear bedroom (smoke alarm) no battery
24	Basement midway from rear looking towards front	49	First floor rear bedroom (smoke alarm) back plate
25	Basement Front wall	50	First floor rear looking towards front of house





**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
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**Office of the Fire Marshal**



## Photographic Evidence Log

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Date: 5/5/19

All photos were taken with: ☐ Nikon D5100 Digital

☒ Canon Rebel XT Digital

All photographs show a true and accurate depiction of the fire scene located at: 150 West Street

51	First floor bathroom	76	Front stairwell looking at 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor landing
52	First floor bathroom ceiling	77	Front stairwell landing looking at right side window
53	First floor mid bedroom (right side of house)	78	Front stairwell landing looking down to first floor
54	First floor mid bedroom (right side of house) ceiling	79	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor livingroom looking from Kitchen
55	First floor mid bedroom (right side of house) door lock outside	80	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front bedroom looking from livingroom
56	First floor mid bedroom (right side of house) door lock inside	81	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front bedroom
57	First floor Kitchen wall mounted smoke alarm	82	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front bedroom ceiling (missing smoke alarm)
58	First floor Kitchen wall mounted smoke alarm (non operational)	83	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front bedroom ceiling (missing smoke alarm)
59	First floor Kitchen wall mounted smoke alarm (non operational) back side of alarm	84	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor livingroom looking into kitchen
60	First floor bedroom (Left side)	85	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen looking from Livingroom doorway
61	First floor bedroom (Left side) ceiling	86	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen looking from Livingroom doorway
62	First floor bedroom (Left side) missing smoke alarm	87	Kitchen looking toward right side of house
63	First floor kitchen	88	Kitchen looking toward mid bedroom on the Left side
64	First floor (looking from Kitchen towards front of house)	89	Kitchen looking toward mid bedroom on the Left side toward front of house
65	First floor (Front bedroom)	90	Kitchen looking at ceiling mid bedroom on the Left side
66	First floor (front bedroom) missing smoke alarm #1 by Kitchen door	91	Kitchen looking toward mid bedroom on the Left side, smoke alarm location
67	First floor (front bedroom) missing smoke alarm #2, by main entry	92	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor mid bedroom looking towards rear of building
68	First floor(front bedroom) main entry door	93	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor mid bedroom looking towards rear of building
69	First floor(front bedroom) main entry door, door lock	94	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor closet located in hall towards rear of building



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70	Front door, main entry	95	In the 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen looking towards rear of the structure
71	Front entry, Scooter	96	n the 2nd floor Kitchen looking towards rear of the structure (hall ceiling)
72	Front entry smoke alarm located on left wall	97	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom
73	Front entry door	98	Second floor rear bedroom
74	Front entry door smoke alarm battery within	99	Second floor rear bedroom smoke alarm plate
75	Front entry 1 <sup>st</sup> floor landing to 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	100	Second floor rear looking towards rear stair entry

Additional sheets attached





**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
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Date: 5/5/19

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☒ Canon Rebel XT Digital

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101	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor rear hall looking towards rear stair	126	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom looking at front window
102	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor landing looking down to first floor	127	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom left wall
103	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor rear stair smoke alarm	128	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom left wall
104	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor rear looking to stairway for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	129	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front window looking down to exterior front
105	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor stairway, 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor ceiling	130	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom looking from front to rear
106	Rear stairway leading to 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	131	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom door(interior)
107	Rear stair wall chase	132	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom door(exterior)
108	Rear stair ceiling light fixture	133	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor mid bedroom lock(interior)
109	Stairs looking to 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	134	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor mid bedroom lock(exterior)
110	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rear looking towards front of building	135	Bottom of first floor front stair landing
111	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rear bedroom	136	Front Stair mid
112	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rear bedroom ceiling and entry door	137	Front stair landing clearing
113	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rear bedroom entry door lock(inside)	138	Front stair mid clearing
114	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor rear bedroom entry door lock(outside)	139	Front stair mid clearing
115	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor bathroom	140	Front stair top of stair clearing
116	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor bathroom (phone on floor)	141	Front stair 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor landing
117	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor melted smoke alarm on hall floor	142	Front stair ceiling
118	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor mid bedroom on the right side of house	143	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen
119	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor mid bedroom on the right side of house (smoke alarm plate and light)	144	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front stair rug remnant
120	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor hallway	145	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor front landing rug remnant
121	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor hallway	146	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen floor clearing
122	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom ceiling	147	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen floor clearing looking towards right side
123	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom content	148	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen cabinets/refrigerator
124	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom contents looking towards right side	149	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen, towards rear of house looking at stove
125	3 <sup>rd</sup> floor front bedroom contents looking towards front of building	150	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen stove

Additional sheets attached t.



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE**  
**Office of the Fire Marshal**



**INCIDENT SUMMARY:**

**SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION:**

**WITNESSES:**

**AREA OF ORIGIN:**

**FLAME SPREAD:**

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS:**

On \_\_\_\_\_ at approximately \_\_\_\_\_ hours, I, \_\_\_\_\_ who is an assigned member of the New Haven Fire Investigation Unit was requested and responded to \_\_\_\_\_ to determine the cause and origin of a fire.

**CONCLUSION:**

Based on the information gathered and the evidence available on the scene at the time of this investigation, I have determined that the cause of the fire was \_\_\_\_\_.

At the time of this report's submission, the status of the case is considered: **OPEN** ☐ **CLOSED** ☐

**SIGNED**

New Haven Fire Department  
Fire Marshal's Office  
Fire Investigation Unit

**DATE**



**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE SERVICE**  
Office of the Fire Marshal



## Photographic Evidence Log

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151	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor stove control knob locations	176
152	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor stove model/serial numbers	177
153	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor ceiling BX cable blowout	178
154	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor ceiling BX cable blowout	179
155	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor ceiling BX cable blowout	180
156	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen looking at right wall	181
157	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen stove gas supply line and outlet	182
158	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen right side wall behind stove	183
159	2 <sup>nd</sup> floor Kitchen right side wall to the right of stove	184
160	Burnt towel found in Kitchen on 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	185
161		186
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Additional sheets attached

