

# ***CAL FIRE***



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**  
**Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit**  
1199 Big Tree Lane  
St. Helena, CA 94574

## **INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**CASE NUMBER:** 17CALNU010051

**CASE NAME:** Partrick Incident

**DATE:** October 8, 2017

**INCIDENT TYPE:** Wildland Fire

**INCIDENT INVESTIGATORS:** Lead Investigator Brandon BERTOLINO, FC- LNU  
Vince BERGLAND, BC-CSR

1 **1 - VIOLATIONS:**

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3 **Public Resource Code 4421:** A person shall not set fire or cause fire to be set to any  
4 forest, brush, or other flammable material which is on any land that is not his own, or  
5 under his legal control, without the permission of the owner, lessee, or agent of the  
6 owner or lessee of the land.

7

8 **Public Resource Code 4292:** Except as otherwise provided in Section 4296, any  
9 person that owns, controls, operates, or maintains any electrical transmission or  
10 distribution line upon any mountainous land, or forest-covered land, brush-covered  
11 land, or grass-covered land shall, during such times and in such areas as are  
12 determined to be necessary by the director or the agency which has primary  
13 responsibility for fire protection of such areas, maintain around and adjacent to any pole  
14 or tower which supports a switch, fuse, transformer, lightning arrester, line junction, or  
15 dead end or corner pole, a firebreak which consists of a clearing of not less than 10 feet  
16 in each direction from the outer circumference of such pole or tower. This section does  
17 not, however, apply to any line which is used exclusively as telephone, telegraph,  
18 telephone or telegraph messenger call, fire or alarm line, or other line which is classed  
19 as a communication circuit by the Public Utilities Commission. The director or the  
20 agency which has primary fire protection responsibility for the protection of such areas  
21 may permit exceptions from the requirements of this section which are based upon the  
22 specific circumstances involved.

23

24 **Public Resource Code 4293:** Except as otherwise provided in Sections 4294 to 4296,  
25 inclusive, any person that owns, controls, operates, or maintains any electrical  
26 transmission or distribution line upon any mountainous land, or in forest-covered land,  
27 brush-covered land, or grass-covered land shall, during such times and in such areas  
28 as are determined to be necessary by the director or the agency which has primary  
29 responsibility for the fire protection of such areas, maintain a clearance of the  
30 respective distances which are specified in this section in all directions between all  
31 vegetation and all conductors which are carrying electric current:

1 (a) For any line which is operating at 2,400 or more volts, but less than 72,000 volts,  
2 four feet.

3

4 (b) For any line which is operating at 72,000 or more volts, but less than 110,000 volts,  
5 six feet.

6

7 (c) For any line which is operating at 110,000 or more volts, 10 feet.

8

9 In every case, such distance shall be sufficiently great to furnish the required clearance  
10 at any position of the wire, or conductor when the adjacent air temperature is 120  
11 degrees Fahrenheit, or less. Dead trees, old decadent or rotten trees, trees weakened  
12 by decay or disease and trees or portions thereof that are leaning toward the line which  
13 may contact the line from the side or may fall on the line shall be felled, cut, or trimmed  
14 so as to remove such hazard. The director or the agency which has primary  
15 responsibility for the fire protection of such areas may permit exceptions from the  
16 requirements of this section which are based upon the specific circumstances involved.

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1 **2 - SUMMARY:**

2 (All times and distances are approximate)

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4 On Sunday, October 8, 2017, at 11:48 p.m. the Saint Helena Emergency Command  
5 Center (ECC) dispatched CAL FIRE and cooperating agency units to a reported  
6 vegetation fire at 1721 Partrick Road in Napa, CA. The fire was identified as the  
7 Partrick Incident. The Partrick Fire burned together with the Nuns Incident and became  
8 a part of the Southern Complex on October 10, 2017. The fire was contained October  
9 31, 2017. The Partrick fire burned 8,283 acres and affected 283 parcels (Attachment #  
10 2).

11  
12 During the origin and cause investigation I, Brandon BERTOLINO, determined the fire  
13 was caused when an oak tree (Evidence Item 3&4) fell over and contacted a Pacific  
14 Gas and Electric (PG&E) powerline conductor. The oak tree broke one of the two  
15 powerline conductors and brought it to the ground. Embers from this contact with the  
16 conductor ignited the fine dead fuels that the powerline conductor and tree had fallen  
17 into. Additionally, when the energized conductor contacted the fine dead fuels on the  
18 ground it ignited the ground fuels. This resulted in a wildland fire which burned  
19 uncontrolled onto numerous properties not owned or controlled by PG&E, resulting in  
20 multiple violations (See part 1, Violations).

21  
22 During the investigation, I determined PG&E and/or its sub-contractors, Davey Tree  
23 Expert Company, conducted powerline vegetation management inspections and  
24 maintenance in June and September of 2017. PG&E had replaced a power pole that  
25 had broken in June 2017 in the same location of my general origin area (GOA).  
26 The land owner Jeff FONTANELLA expressed his concern about other trees in the area  
27 during the June incident (Attachment #7). PG&E and Davey Tree Expert Company  
28 failed to identify hazard trees during the repair in June 2017 as required pursuant to  
29 PRC 4293. The failure to identify the hazard oak tree resulted in the tree falling,  
30 contacting the powerline conductor operated by PG&E, and igniting the Partrick fire.



1 **3 - SUBJECTS:**

2

3 Pacific Gas & Electric Corporation

4 77 Beale Street 24<sup>th</sup> Floor

5 San Francisco, CA 94105

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7 The Davey Tree Expert Company

8 1500 N. Mantua St.

9 Kent, OH 44240

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1 **4 – VICTIMS:**

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3 The Partrick incident burned approximately 8,283 acres within Napa and Sonoma  
4 counties. The fire affected 283 parcels (Attachment # 2). This summary does not  
5 account for all damage to infrastructure, mobile property, miscellaneous property  
6 improvements, natural vegetation, livestock, wildlife or other miscellaneous damage.

7  
8 **WITNESSES:**

9  
10 W-1 BERGLAND, Vince

11 CAL FIRE Battalion Chief  
12 (559) 231-1600

13 *Can testify to assisting in my initial investigation and determination of the cause of*  
14 *the Partrick Incident.*

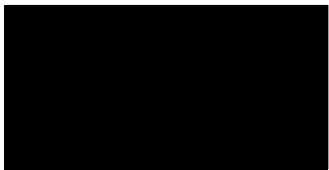
15  
16 W-2 ANDERSON, Jarrett

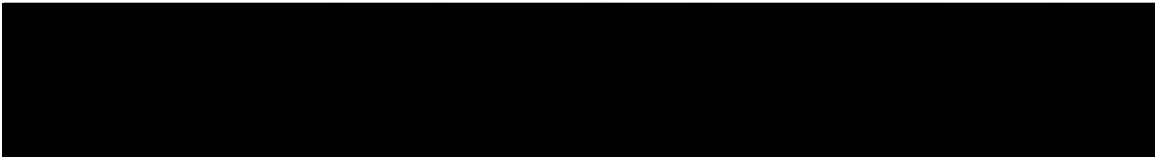
17 Napa City Fire Dept. Battalion Chief  
18 (707) 695-2066

19 *Can testify to the fire being at 1721 Partrick Road and to the southwest. Can*  
20 *testify to the fire not involving any property to the northeast of 1721 Partrick Road*  
21 *upon his arrival at 23:35 p.m. October, 8, 2017.*

22  
23 W-3 FONTANELLA, Jeff

24 Reporting Party 

25 

26 



1 W-4 RAY, Susan

2 Reporting Party

3 [REDACTED]  
4 [REDACTED]

5 *Can testify observing fire on [REDACTED] property headed southwest at 11:30*  
6 *p.m. on October 8, 2017.*

8 W-5 RAY, John

9 [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED]

11 *Can testify to calling 911 at 11:40 p.m. on October 8, 2017. Can testify to*  
12 *observing a fire on [REDACTED] property headed to southwest.*

14 W-6 ROSE, Christopher

15 Brothers In Law Security LLC Chief/Owner

16 (707) 321-0389

17 *Can testify to providing 24 hour security for Origin at the Partrick incident.*

19 W-7 SVT Gruppe Inc

20 (707) 927-2200

21 *Can testify to providing security for the origin at the Partrick incident.*

23 W-8 LEUZINGER, Peter

24 CAL FIRE Forester II

25 PO Box 839

26 Cobb, CA 95426

27 (707) 928-4378

28 *Can testify to examining the subject oak tree.*

29

30

1 W-9 PORTER, Mark  
2 Marks Tree Service and Consulting  
3 (951) 354-8733  
4 *Can testify to examining the subject oak tree.*

5

6 W-10 DEGRAFF, Jed  
7 CAL FIRE Senior Land Surveyor  
8 1300 U Street, Suite 100  
9 P.O. Box 944246  
10 Sacramento, CA 94244-2460  
11 (916) 327-2583  
12 *Can testify to conducting LIDAR operation of Partick GOA/SOA.*

13

14 W-11 GAWRONSKI, Jeff  
15 CAL FIRE Survey Party Chief  
16 1300 U Street, Suite 100  
17 P.O. Box 944246  
18 Sacramento, CA 94244-2460  
19 (916) 445-4276  
20 *Can testify to conducting LIDAR operation of Partick GOA/SOA.*

21

22 W-12 DE LUCA, Maria  
23 PG&E Senior Claims Investigator Law Claims  
24 300 Burnell Street  
25 Napa, CA 94559  
26 (707) 257-5953  
27 *Can testify to being present during evidence collection and representing PG&E.*

28

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1 **5 - EVIDENCE:**

- 2
- 3 E-1 Game camera
- 4 E-2 Game camera SD card
- 5 E-3 Part of oak tree stump
- 6 E-4 Part of oak tree that was on powerline conductor
- 7 E-5 East/Roadside powerline conductor
- 8 E-6 West/Uphill powerline conductor from northeast pole
- 9 E-6.1 Pieces of West/Uphill powerline conductor
- 10 E-6.2 Three-foot section of West/Uphill powerline conductor
- 11 E-6.3 West/Uphill powerline conductor from southeast pole equipped with transformer
- 12 E-7 Fulgurite from West/Uphill powerline conductor
- 13 E-8 USB Flash Drive containing photos from FONTANELLA

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1 **6 – CONDITIONS:**

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3 **Fuel:**

- 4 • Grass, brush, and oak woodland.

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6 **Weather:**

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8 Atlas Peak RAWS on October 8, 2017, at 11:29 p.m.:

- 9 • Temperature: 62 degrees Fahrenheit
- 10 • Relative Humidity: 16 percent
- 11 • Wind: NNE at 13 MPH with gusts of 28 MPH
- 12 • Distance to RAWS is approximately 11 miles to the northeast

13

14 Santa Rosa RAWS on October 8, 2017, at 11:29 p.m.:

- 15 • Temperature: 71 degrees Fahrenheit
- 16 • Relative Humidity: 11 percent
- 17 • Wind: NE at 14 MPH with gusts of 40 MPH
- 18 • Distance to RAWS is approximately 22 miles to the northwest

19

20 Game Camera on October 8, 2017, at 11:21 p.m.

- 21 • Temperature: 64 degrees Fahrenheit
- 22 • Temperature at 11:22 p.m.: 68 degrees Fahrenheit
- 23 • Temperature at 11:23 p.m.: 75 degrees Fahrenheit
- 24 • Temperature at 11:24 p.m.: 118 degrees Fahrenheit

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1 **7 – EQUIPMENT:**

2 Pacific Gas & Electric Corporation powerline conductor. Pueblo 2103 Circuit.

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1 **8 - PROPERTY:**

2 The Patrick Incident originated on the following property:

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4 APN: 050-010-018

5 Address: 1721, 1717 Patrick Road, Napa, CA 94559

6 Owner: [REDACTED]

7 County: Napa

8

9 **Global Positioning System (GPS) Datum WGS 84**

10 Latitude: 38 18.622

11 Longitude: -122 22.225

12

13 The Patrick Fire burned approximately 8,283 acres within Napa and Sonoma counties.

14 Damaged property can be found in (Attachment #2).

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1 **9 - NARRATIVE:**

2 (All times and distances are approximate)

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4 On Sunday, October 8, 2017, at 11:41 p.m., the Saint Helena ECC dispatched CAL  
5 FIRE and cooperating agency units to a reported vegetation fire at 1721 Partrick Road  
6 in Napa, CA (Attachment # 1). The fire burned 8,283 acres and merged with the Nuns  
7 fire on October 10, 2017. The fire affected 283 parcels (Attachment # 2).

8  
9 On Monday, October 9, 2017 at 7:00 a.m., CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Mike THOMPSON  
10 assigned me to the Partrick Incident. I responded in uniform in my CAL FIRE assigned  
11 vehicle from the CAL FIRE station in Yountville, CA. While responding, I observed the  
12 smoke column from the Partrick fire and could see the fire and smoke heading in a  
13 southwest direction as the wind was coming out of the north/northeast. I arrived at  
14 Partrick Road, near 1721 Partrick Road at 8:30 a.m. The fire appeared to be several  
15 thousand acres from my vantage point near the top of Partrick Road. I was stopped  
16 near 1733 Partrick Road by a CAL FIRE inmate crew Captain. The Captain told me he  
17 believed the fire had started at a burned down structure at 1733 Partrick Road. I drove  
18 to the burned down structure at 1733 Partrick Road at 9:00 a.m. I investigated the area  
19 around the structure, and the indicators I observed helped me determine that the  
20 location was not the origin. All the indicators I found represented advancing and lateral  
21 movement. I could exclude the area around the structure as being the GOA.

22  
23 I drove to [REDACTED] Partrick Road and contacted a reporting party, Jeff FONTANELLA at  
24 10:15 a.m. FONTANELLA told me that around 11:20 p.m. the night before, the lights in  
25 his house started flickering. FONTANELLA told me that he then went outside to  
26 investigate why the lights were flickering. FONTANELLA told me when he went outside  
27 he could see fire to the southeast and was describing it near the powerlines that were  
28 visible from his back porch by the pool. FONTANELLA told me the fire was moving fast  
29 and appeared to be at the top of the hill within three minutes. FONTANELLA called 911  
30 at 11:28 p.m. to report the vegetation fire. FONTANELLA told me he had left his



1 residence within 30 minutes after making the call.

2  
3 At 10:45 a.m. I made access to the area identified by FONTANELLA through a locked  
4 gate. The gate had both a PG&E and homeowner lock securing it. FONTANELLA gave  
5 me the combination for his lock which I used to make entry. I started my investigation  
6 in the area near the powerlines that FONTANELLA showed me from his porch. I walked  
7 down the dirt road looking at foliage freeze, grass stem fall and angle of char. I found a  
8 location that had some heavy downed fuels with foliage freeze that was going in  
9 opposing directions. I flagged off this area to further investigate. At 11:00 a.m. I started  
10 my investigation. I walked around the area twice in opposing directions. I identified fire  
11 spread indicators representing advancing (head), lateral, and backing fire spread using  
12 the grass stem fall and protection on downed heavy fuels. I entered the area from the  
13 advancing indicators and walked in a serpentine pattern identifying advancing and  
14 lateral (flank) fire spread indicators. At 2:45 p.m., CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Vince  
15 BERGLAND, Badge #2156 arrived at my location. I briefed BERGLAND on what I had  
16 found and he assisted me in my investigation. BERGLAND and I looked for indicators  
17 and placed flags indicating direction of fire (Attachment # 3). I observed a tree limb  
18 suspended from a tree that appeared to have two burn marks which could have been  
19 from contacting the conductors above. I took 14 photos of the location (IMG\_0075 to  
20 IMG\_0088). My camera was not reset back to zero for image log. Photographs for the  
21 Partrick Incident start at IMG\_0075. At 7:00 p.m. it was too dark to continue  
22 investigating the area.

23  
24 At 7:00 p.m. I contacted Christopher ROSE, Chief and owner of Brothers in Law  
25 Security, who was at my location. I told ROSE to not let anybody in past the gate.  
26 ROSE understood and agreed to keep the area secure and to not let anybody enter.  
27 ROSE told me he would be providing 24-hour security at my scene, and security was  
28 also provided by SVT (Attachment #4). I left the scene at 7:30 p.m.

29  
30 On October 10, 2017 at 7:00 a.m., I arrived at the scene I had security protecting.



1 Security told me nobody had made entry. At 9:00 a.m. BERGLAND and I continued  
2 investigating the area. At 9:30 a.m. BERGLAND and I were coming up inconclusive  
3 with evidence to support this area as being the GOA. BERGLAND and I decided to  
4 keep walking southwest down the powerlines, observing macro indicators. I walked in a  
5 serpentine pattern from the road down to the bottom of the drainage. We followed  
6 macro indicators such as foliage freeze, angle of char, and grass stem fall. The  
7 indicators were leading us to the drainage that was to the south of our original location.

8 At 10:00 a.m. BERGLAND and I found a location with a large oak tree that had fallen  
9 over bringing down the powerline conductor. [At 10:30 a.m. I found a game camera in  
10 the later to be identified GOA (Evidence #1).] I took a photo of the game camera at  
11 11:29 a.m. (IMG\_0089-IMG\_0090).

12  
13 BERGLAND and I left the initial area we were investigating to contact other possible  
14 reporting parties in the area. At 12:40 p.m., I contacted John and Sue RAY at [REDACTED]  
15 [REDACTED] John RAY told me he was watching a football game around 11:20 p.m.  
16 the night of October 8. John RAY told me at 11:30 p.m. his wife Sue RAY came out of  
17 the bedroom and told him she could see a fire on the hill. View from Sue RAY's window  
18 (IMG\_0232-IMG\_0234). John and Sue RAY told me that the power was flickering on  
19 and off during the time they discovered the fire and were evacuating but were not clear  
20 on exactly when. John RAY called 911 at 11:40 p.m. and reported a vegetation fire.  
21 John and Sue RAY showed me where the fire was from their residence (IMG\_0091-  
22 IMG\_0093). The fire was to the south of their residence. [The information provided by  
23 John and Sue RAY supported the new location BERGLAND and I discovered, the  
24 downed oak tree on the powerline conductor.]

25  
26 At 1:40 p.m. I arrived at the downed oak tree. BERGLAND flagged off a fifty by fifty-foot  
27 area around the downed oak tree. I observed indicators of angle of char, protection,  
28 grass stem fall, and foliage freeze that supported the area to be a GOA.

29  
30 At 2:45 p.m., I contacted FONTANELLA. I asked FONTANELLA more questions to try

1 and get a better description of where the fire was before he called 911. FONTANELLA  
2 told me he took a video with his cell phone before he had evacuated. I watched the  
3 video FONTANELLA took (Attachment #11). The video supported the location we  
4 flagged off as the GOA. The video showed the fire coming out of the top of the drainage  
5 from the GOA.

6  
7 At 3:00 p.m. BERGLAND and I continued with our investigation. I walked around the  
8 GOA twice in opposing directions. I identified fire spread indicators representing  
9 advancing (head), lateral, and backing fire spread using the grass stem fall and  
10 protection on downed heavy fuels. I entered the GOA from the advancing indicators  
11 and walked in a serpentine pattern identifying advancing and lateral (flank) fire spread  
12 indicators. The indicators I identified led me to a five by five-foot area where the  
13 conductor was under a tree branch to be the specific area of origin SOA #1. The  
14 conductor in SOA #1 was melted to a fulgurite (IMG\_0143). The broken powerline  
15 conductor that was connected to the southeast power pole had another SOA #2 based  
16 on the spread indicators.

17  
18 At 3:45 p.m. I removed the game camera from the tree. I secured the game camera in  
19 my vehicle to be stored as evidence. At 5:22 p.m., the powerline conductors that were  
20 on the ground started buzzing and were apparently being energized (Attachment #24).  
21 The oak tree limb that the conductor was in contact with ignited, I captured a photo of  
22 the tree limb on fire while maintaining a safe distance (IMG\_0149-IMG\_0151). I  
23 contacted the Division Group Supervisor (DIVS), using my portable radio, on the tactical  
24 frequency that was assigned to the division I was located in. I told the DIVS that the  
25 downed powerline conductor behind 1721 Patrick Road was being energized. The  
26 DIVS told me that PG&E was trying to restore power to some of the residents on  
27 Patrick Road. I told the DIVS to contact PG&E and to not restore power. The DIVS  
28 responded back several minutes later and told me that he had contacted PG&E and  
29 that the power would not be restored. The fire on the branch I observed stopped  
30 burning once the powerline conductor was de-energized. At 8:00 p.m., I left the scene.



1 I confirmed that security was in place before leaving. I met with FONTANELLA on my  
2 way off his property. I asked FONTANELLA if he was aware of a game camera on his  
3 property. FONTANELLA told me he had placed a game camera down by the spring on  
4 his property. I told FONTANELLA I had removed the camera and asked his permission  
5 to try and obtain any footage from the SD card. FONTANELLA told me I could keep the  
6 camera and do whatever I would like with it.

7

8 On October 11, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. I met with CAL FIRE Forester II Peter LEUZINGER,  
9 at 1721 Partrick Road. I confirmed with security that nobody had entered the scene  
10 while I was gone. LEUZINGER examined the oak tree that fell on the powerline  
11 conductor (Attachment # 5). [At 9:40 a.m. BERGLAND investigated SOA #2 and  
12 placed indicator flags (See Attachment # 3).] I started taking photos at 10:00 a.m. At  
13 11:00 a.m. BERGLAND and I used a metal detector in SOA #1 and SOA #2. The metal  
14 detector alerted at three areas, but we were unable to find anything. BERGLAND was  
15 released from the incident at 12:00 p.m.

16

17 I investigated the circuit breaker box located ninety feet to the northwest of SOA #2. I  
18 placed indicator flags in the area. The indicators I discovered all represented advancing  
19 fire, and therefore I excluded the area as being an additional area of origin (IMG\_0237-  
20 IMG\_0252).

21

22 At 2:42 p.m., I spoke with FONTANELLA by cell phone. FONTANELLA told me that  
23 there was a power pole down by the spring on his property that had been replaced.  
24 FONTANELLA told me a tree had come down and broke the power pole around June  
25 11, 2017(Attachment #10, Page 4). I asked FONTANELLA if it started a fire.  
26 FONTANELLA told me it did not start a fire because it had just rained the day before  
27 and the fuels were still green. I observed that the northwest pole in my GOA had been  
28 replaced recently and could determine this was the same location as FONTANELLA  
29 described to me on the phone call. I left the scene at 7:00 p.m. I confirmed that  
30 security was in place before leaving for the evening.

1 On October 12, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. I arrived at the scene. I confirmed with security that  
2 nobody had entered the scene while I was not present. I continued investigating SOA  
3 #1, placing indicator flags.

4  
5 At 9:30 a.m. I removed the game camera from my vehicle to try and extract the SD  
6 card. I successfully extracted the SD card. At 12:55 p.m. I transferred the SD files to  
7 my department issued laptop (Attachment #12). I stored the SD card in my locked gun  
8 vault (Evidence #3). I reviewed the files from the game camera. I found another  
9 possible SOA #3 after reviewing the SD card. I discovered a photo and video of a fire in  
10 its incipient stage. The time and date indicated on the data indicated October 8, 2017 at  
11 11:21 p.m. The data also included the temperature of 64 degrees Fahrenheit. The last  
12 photo I observed from the data appears to be of the camera lens melting, taken at  
13 11:24 p.m., with a temperature of 118 degrees Fahrenheit. I also found evidence that  
14 Davey Tree had been in the GOA on 6/11, 6/14 and 6/16 of 2017 after reviewing the  
15 data off the game camera. I also found evidence that PG&E had been in the GOA on  
16 9/18/17 after review of the game camera data (Attachment #12).

17  
18 At 3:30 p.m., arborist Mark PORTER arrived at my location. PORTER examined the  
19 area and oak tree that fell onto the conductor (Attachment # 22).

20  
21 I flagged off SOA #3 and conducted my investigation. I walked around SOA #3 twice  
22 in opposing directions. I identified fire spread indicators representing advancing (head),  
23 lateral, and backing fire spread using the grass stem fall and protection on downed  
24 fuels. I entered SOA #3 from the advancing indicators and walked in a serpentine  
25 pattern identifying advancing and lateral (flank) fire spread indicators. I narrowed SOA  
26 #3 down to three by three foot. I used a magnet in the area to try and obtain any  
27 evidence. I was unable to locate any pieces of metal in SOA #3. Some powerline  
28 conductors are made of aluminum and are not detected by a metal detector. I ran the  
29 metal detector over the down powerline conductor that was lying in the GOA, the metal  
30 detector did not alert. Using the NWCG FI-210 guidelines for fire cause classes, I could



1 exclude all cause classes except electrical power in SOA #3. At 4:57 p.m. I took  
2 photographs of SOA #3 (IMG\_0204-IMG\_0220). I left the scene at 7:30 p.m. I  
3 confirmed security was in place before leaving for the evening.  
4

5 On October 13, 2017 at 8:00 a.m., I arrived at the scene. I confirmed with security that  
6 nobody had entered the scene. At 9:00 a.m., the Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR)  
7 team arrived at the origin. The LIDAR team consisted of CAL FIRE Survey Party Chief,  
8 Jeff GAWRONSKI and CAL FIRE Senior Land Surveyor, Jed DEGRAFF. I explained to  
9 the LIDAR team what I had found and expressed key points of interest I wanted them to  
10 capture. I told them that I wanted them to capture the entire GOA, which I described,  
11 and the key points I expressed were location of indicator flags, the subject oak tree, the  
12 three SOA's, the powerline conductor, and the game camera (Attachment #6).  
13

14 I left at 12:30 p.m., to obtain a written witness statement from Sue RAY (Attachment #  
15 7). Security was still in place while I was gone.  
16

17 At 1:15 p.m. I went to [REDACTED] Partrick Road to see if I could obtain more information. I  
18 contacted the homeowner at [REDACTED] Partrick Road, Steven TAYLOR. TAYLOR told me  
19 that around 11:30 p.m. his wife had got out of bed to use the restroom. TAYLOR told  
20 me when his wife turned on the bathroom light it was very dim so she woke him up to  
21 investigate. TAYLOR told me he got out of bed and his wife saw a glow outside the  
22 window. TAYLOR said when they looked outside that they both could see a fire.  
23 TAYLOR told me that the fire was on the hill behind the FONTANELLA winery.  
24

25 At 5:00 p.m., LIDAR left for the evening. The LIDAR team said they would have to  
26 complete their work the following day. I left the scene at 6:00 p.m. I confirmed security  
27 was in place before leaving.  
28

29 On October 14, 2017 at 7:45 a.m. I arrived at the scene. I confirmed with security  
30 nobody had entered the scene. LIDAR arrived at 8:00 a.m. and continued their work.

1 At 9:15 a.m., two PG&E workers attempted to access my location. I spoke with the two  
2 PG&E workers and informed them that I was conducting an investigation and they could  
3 not make access near my origin. The PG&E workers understood and cooperated.

4  
5 LIDAR completed their assignment at 10:30 a.m. and were released (Attachment # 6).

6  
7 At 12:15 CAL FIRE firefighters Nicholas EVANS and Erik JOHNSON arrived at the  
8 scene to assist me in collecting a part of the tree for evidence. I had them cut a section  
9 of the oak tree stump and a section of the oak tree with a chainsaw. At 12:46 p.m., we  
10 loaded the evidence into a stake side utility truck. I followed the stake side truck to  
11 Middletown, CA to secure the evidence in one of our secured evidence Conex boxes. I  
12 confirmed security was in place before leaving the scene. I arrived in Middletown, CA  
13 at 2:30 p.m. and secured Evidence #3 and #4 into our secured evidence Conex box. I  
14 drove back to the scene to let security know that I would be gone for the evening.

15  
16 On October 15, 2017 at 8:00 a.m., I arrived at the scene. Security confirmed nobody  
17 had entered the scene while I was gone. I worked on follow up interviews with  
18 witnesses. I left the scene for the evening at 6:00 p.m. Security was in place before I  
19 left.

20  
21 On October 16, 2017 at 8:35 a.m. I arrived at the scene. Security confirmed nobody  
22 had entered the scene while I was gone. At 11:30 a.m. PG&E and Sacramento  
23 Municipal Utility District (SMUD) entered the 1721 Partrick Road property to restore  
24 power to the winery and residence. I escorted the workers and identified the area in  
25 which they could be in. The workers were cooperative and did not interfere with my  
26 investigation. At 3:00 p.m., I took photos of the indicator flags that I had placed  
27 excluding the circuit breaker box and the well pump as viable sources of ignition  
28 (IMG\_0237-IMG\_0252). I left the scene at 6:00 p.m. I confirmed security was in place  
29 before leaving.



1 On October 17, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. I arrived at the scene. Security confirmed nobody  
2 had entered the scene while I was gone. I continued working on follow up interviews  
3 with witnesses. At 3:30 p.m., FONTANELLA gave me a written witness statement  
4 (Attachment # 7). FONTANELLA showed me photos he took of the location where the  
5 power pole had broken in June. The power pole was the northeast pole in my GOA. I  
6 asked FONTANELLA if he could put the photos together and email them to me.  
7 FONTANELLA told me he would figure out a way to get me the photos. I left the scene  
8 at 7:00 p.m. I confirmed security was in place before leaving.

9  
10 On October 18, 2017 at 7:35 a.m., I arrived at the scene. Security confirmed nobody  
11 had entered the scene while I was gone. I met with PG&E at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate  
12 of 1721 Partrick Road. I contacted PG&E Senior Claims Investigator, Maria DE LUCA.  
13 I told DE LUCA no investigators were allowed at the origins until I had concluded my  
14 investigation. I told DE LUCA only PG&E workers who were assisting in retrieving my  
15 evidence were allowed on site. DE LUCA told me she understood. The seven PG&E  
16 workers began retrieving my evidence at 8:37 a.m. DE LUCA asked if she could take  
17 photos. I told DE LUCA she could not take any photos until I had concluded my  
18 investigation, DE LUCA told me she understood. At 8:48 a.m., the powerline  
19 conductors were cut from the poles. At 8:50 a.m., I started collecting and numbering  
20 the remaining pieces of evidence. At 8:57 a.m., I collected Evidence #5, East/Roadside  
21 conductor. At 9:03 a.m., I collected Evidence #6, West/Uphill conductor. At 9:10 a.m. I  
22 collected Evidence #6.1, pieces of West/Uphill conductor. At 9:10 a.m., I collected  
23 Evidence #6.2, 3-foot section of West/Uphill conductor. At 9:10 a.m., I collected  
24 Evidence #6.3, West/Uphill conductor from transformer side. At 9:15 a.m., I collected  
25 Evidence #7, fulgurite from West/Uphill conductor. At 9:30 a.m., I secured all the  
26 evidence obtained in my vehicle (See Attachment #18). I released the scene at 9:30  
27 a.m. At 10:34 a.m., FONTANELLA gave me a USB flash drive containing the photos  
28 from June 2017 and the photos he took on October 8, 2017 (Evidence #8). I left the  
29 scene at 11:00 a.m. At 12:30 p.m., I secured Evidence #1,2,5,6,6.1,6.2,6.3,7, and 8 into  
30 the secured evidence shed in Santa Rosa, CA. At 2:25 p.m., I transferred the photos

1 from the USB flash drive I obtained from FONTANELLA to my department issued  
2 laptop. The photos provided evidence that a tree fell on June 11, 2017, breaking a  
3 power pole in the same location as the origin of the Partrick Incident (Attachment #10,  
4 Pages 2-4). At 3:00 p.m., I secured the USB flash drive (Evidence #8) into the secured  
5 evidence shed in Santa Rosa, CA.

6  
7 On October 19, 2017 at 12:50 p.m., I contacted Napa City Battalion Chief Jarrett  
8 ANDERSON by cell phone. ANDERSON's radio identifier for the Partrick Incident was  
9 Battalion 1. ANDERSON was the Incident Commander for the Partrick Incident on  
10 October 8, 2017. ANDERSON told me he had arrived at the Partrick Incident at 11:35  
11 p.m. ANDERSON told me the fire was at 1721 Partrick Road and was headed to the  
12 south/southwest. ANDERSON told me there was nothing on fire at any locations to the  
13 north or northeast of 1721 Partrick Road upon his arrival.

14  
15 On October 20, 2017 at 9:58 a.m., I transferred all photos I took using my department  
16 issued camera (IMG\_0075-IMG\_0252) of the Partrick Incident, onto a compact disc. I  
17 labeled the disc with the Incident name, Incident number, my name, and badge  
18 number. I did not alter any of the photos that were transferred to the compact disc  
19 (Attachment #9).

20  
21 On October 28, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. I reviewed the information obtained from the CAL  
22 FIRE fire behavior analyst (Attachment # 20). The information for the fuels on the  
23 Partrick were as follows: very high load, dry climate shrub (S) (147), rate of spread  
24 (ROS) at 107.2 chains an hour. Mixed with moderate load, dry climate grass (D) (147),  
25 ROS at 292.1 chains an hour. The data supports the fire progressing at approximately  
26 200 chains an hour. There is 66 feet in a chain, the calculated ROS is 13,200 feet per  
27 hour. I examined the video that FONTANELLA took at 11:39 p.m. I measured the  
28 distance from the area of origin to the area displayed on FONTANELLA's video  
29 (Attachment #10). The distance measures 1216.42 feet which does not account for  
30 terrain, as it is a straight line (Attachment #8). Using the calculations mentioned and



1 determining the fire originating at 11:21 p.m. based on the evidence gathered. The  
2 time between ignition and FONTANELLA's video is 18 minutes. This would indicate the  
3 fire spread approximately 3960 feet from SOA #1 to the area on FONTANELLA's video.  
4

5 On Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 8:00 a.m., I went to the fire origin at 1721 Partrick  
6 Road. I wanted to accurately GPS the distance between SOA #1 and the area shown  
7 on FONTANELLA's video. I started at SOA #1 (N 38 18.622 W -122 22.225) and  
8 ended at (N 38 18.551 W -122 22.480) (Attachment # 8). The distance measured 0.8  
9 mile (4224 feet). This distance accounts for the terrain between the two points. This  
10 data information gathered from the fire behavior analyst and the evidence collected for  
11 ignition time and place of origin supports the origin of the fire at the downed oak tree on  
12 the powerline conductor. I also observed an additional violation of PRC 4292 for  
13 clearance around the southeast pole. I took four photos with my department assigned  
14 digital camera (IMG\_0012-0015). The photographs show vegetation growing around  
15 the power pole with no clearance. The power pole is a dead-end pole equipped with a  
16 transformer.  
17

18 On Friday, November 24, 2017 at 10:40 a.m., I obtained a piece of oak tree off  
19 evidence item #4. I collected it and placed into an evidence bag which I sealed. I  
20 secured the piece of evidence item #4 in my vehicle. I released the piece of evidence  
21 item #4 to UBOLDI on December 12, 2017 at 11:48 a.m. (Attachment #16). The  
22 evidence was sent to a lab for testing.  
23

24 On Friday, December 8, 2017 I reviewed ECC transcripts from October 8, 2017. There  
25 was a report of a possible vegetation fire on October 8 during the same time of the  
26 Partrick Fire, in the Carneros area. The fire was named "Henry". CAL FIRE/Napa  
27 County Fire Engine 12 was to assume Incident Command at the Henry Incident. On  
28 October 8, 2017 at 12:20 a.m. the ECC confirmed that the Henry Fire is part of the  
29 Partrick Incident. Fire Apparatus Engineer David PENA was assigned to Engine 12 on  
30 October 8, 2017. I contacted PENA by phone on December 8, 2017. PENA told me

1 the fire on Henry Road was not a new start and was advancing fire from the Partrick  
2 Incident. PENA told me he told Napa City Fire Battalion 2, Charlie RHOADS that  
3 information.

4  
5 On Thursday, March 8, 2018, I was reviewing the PG&E Vegetation Management Work  
6 Requests I obtained from ZIMMERMAKER. I discovered a work request dated May 4,  
7 2016. The work request form is issued for 1717 Partrick Rd (Attachment #14). The  
8 work request form identifies a tree at latitude/longitude of 38.310323/-122.370502. The  
9 comments on the work request form state "Root Rot/Open Hole at Base". I inputted this  
10 latitude/longitude into Google Earth. The latitude/longitude was in the location of the  
11 oak tree I discovered on the powerline conductor on October 10, 2017. The oak tree  
12 that fell onto the powerline conductor had an open hole at its base.

13  
14 On Friday, March 9, 2018, I spoke with FONTANELLA to obtain a copy of his PG&E bill  
15 for October 8, 2017. On Friday, March 16, 2018 FONTANELLA told me he called PG&E  
16 and they would not give him any of his billing information for October 8, 2017.  
17 (Attachment #3)

18  
19 On Friday, May 4, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. I met with Mike COLE. COLE is a Private  
20 Investigator representing Subro. We met at 1172 National Drive in Sacramento, CA, at  
21 Unified Investigations & Sciences, Inc. COLE wanted me to view the evidence that he  
22 had collected from the Partrick Fire. During the viewing, I observed an oak tree branch  
23 with burn marks, fragments of metal, and several fulgurites. I did not exchange any  
24 information regarding my investigation with COLE.

25  
26 On Monday, May 21, 2018 I received a PG&E Partrick Incident description & factual  
27 summary document from ZIMMERMAKER (Attachment #24). The summary states at  
28 11:20 p.m. on October 8, 2017, a smart meter that was located downstream from the  
29 SOA reported a power down event. The information PG&E provided stated that four  
30 minutes later, 27 smart meters on the load side of Fuse 9295 recorded a series of



1 power off/on events. Fuse 9295 is the nearest fuse downstream from the SOA. The  
2 game camera data's initial photograph of the Partrick Fire was at 11:21 p.m., one  
3 minute after the reported power down event. The facts provided by PG&E support my  
4 investigation findings and conclusion.

5

6 **Opinion and Conclusion:**

7 I believe based on my training, education, experience, observations, evidence, reports  
8 and witness statements the wildland fire (Partrick Incident) was caused when an oak  
9 tree (Evidence Item #4) contacted a PG&E powerline conductor which ignited portions  
10 of the tree. Embers from contact with the conductor dropped in the fine dead fuels  
11 below igniting the wildland. Additionally, the energized powerline conductor made direct  
12 contact with the ground, igniting the dry dead surface fuels. Based off the arborist report  
13 and lab results, the subject oak tree had obvious signs of rot and decay.

14

15 I reserve the right to re-examine this investigation if additional information is discovered  
16 or provided to me that could amend or reinforce my opinions or conclusion.

17

18 END OF REPORT

19

20

 5/22/18

21

Signature

Date

22

Brandon Bertolino, Badge #2756

23

Fire Captain Specialist, CAL FIRE

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

**10 - ATTACHMENTS:**

1. FC-34 Report
2. Damage Inspection Report
3. LE-71 Reports
4. Security Log
5. Forester Report
6. LIDAR Map
7. Witness Statements (LE-78)
8. Google Map
9. Original Photographs (Disc)
10. FONTANELLA Photographs/Video's
11. 4292 Violation Photographs
12. Game Camera Data
13. CHP Video
14. PG&E Data/Maintenance Records
15. PUC Report
16. Chain of custody (Piece of Item #4)
17. Damage Inspection Report (Nuns Incident)
18. Evidence Log
19. RAWs Data
20. Fire Behavior Analyst Data
21. ECC transcript
22. Arborist Report
23. Fire origin flight photographs (Disc)
24. PG&E Partrick Incident Description & Facts Summary