

**Parker Mills Interview-Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 5:10 P.M.**

SCHNAIDT: Wednesday, September 16, 2015, 5:10 P.M. Interview of Parker Mills. White GMC Sierra extended cab, California 13669J1 and a red Subaru station wagon, California 6MAD328. Pickup truck is a ¾ ton. Toyota Prius, 7EXX395, California plate, silver. Probably out to greet me, we're driving by the first time. Female, white, elderly. Hello. Hi.

L. MILLS: Hello, I'm Laura, Parker's my husband.

SCHNAIDT: I'm John Schnaidt with CAL FIRE.

L. MILLS: It's nice to meet you.

SCHNAIDT: Nice to meet you.

L. MILLS: Come on in.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, parking here is fine? Nora is that right?

L. MILLS: Laura.

SCHNAIDT: Laura, sorry.

L. MILLS: Parker, John from CDF is here.

SCHNAIDT: Hello.

P. MILLS: Hi John.

SCHNAIDT: Hello Mr. Mills, I'm John Schnaidt, Fire Prevention Officer with CAL FIRE.

P. MILLS: Hi. Have a seat.

SCHNAIDT: Thank you. We're still doing the investigation and there's an investigation team on it. Once I figure out a lead investigator I'll let you know who that is. I can be it for now. That's my contact info. I'm just right up there at Willits. Email is probably the best way to get me. Ok, so, I just need your information and your contact phone number. Do you have a driver's license on you?

P. MILLS: Sure. As I mentioned to you on the phone, the 8015 High Valley is kind of a second residence and the primary resident, if you want to talk to him, he's on the road right now and I told him you might want to talk to him.

SCHNAIDT: Who would that be?

P. MILLS: His name is John Pinch.

SCHNAIDT: John Pinch, ok yeah, I think they wanted me to look into him too.

P. MILLS: I'm going to see him later today so I don't know if, if they'll let us back in over there, he can certainly come to Willits.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, yeah, I think they're starting to escort people in just for a few hours, or a few minutes at a time and then they're getting them back out.

L. MILLS: We went in yesterday to get the cat.

SCHNAIDT: Did you? Ok.

L. MILLS: Fifteen minutes.

SCHNAIDT: Fifteen minutes is that what they give you? Ok, let me just get this info from your license. And phone number?

P. MILLS: [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], I'll email you when I get time so you can have the address.

SCHNAIDT: Thank you. Ok, so the 8015 High Valley Road property, are you the sole owner?

P. MILLS: No, it's a joint ownership.

SCHNAIDT: Who are the other owners?

P. MILLS: John and Cindy Pinch. They're the primary residents.

SCHNAIDT: You had a contact number for him?

P. MILLS: I can give you his cell phone, actually maybe I should give you Cindy's cell phone. [REDACTED], that's probably the best.

SCHNAIDT: And that's Cindy?

P. MILLS: Yeah, and the house phone which isn't working is [REDACTED].

SCHNAIDT: How long have they been living there?

P. MILLS: Since 2009.

L. MILLS: Or early 2010.

P. MILLS: I think we bought it in 2009.

L. MILLS: We did buy it in 2009 but I don't know when we moved in, or they moved in.

P. MILLS: Yeah they moved in 2009.

L. MILLS: Late 2009.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, 2009. Are there other people living there as well?

P. MILLS: No.

SCHNAIDT: Just them. When did you buy the house?

L. MILLS: 2009.

P. MILLS: Yeah.

SCHNAIDT: In 2009.

P. MILLS: In like November.

SCHNAIDT: Did you build it new or was it there previous?

P. MILLS: It was a foreclosure. It was represented as finished but it was not, the upstairs was not finished.

SCHNAIDT: Who finished it?

P. MILLS: We did.

SCHNAIDT: So you and the Pinches?

P. MILLS: Primarily John, yeah.

SCHNAIDT: The insurance company for it?

P. MILLS: Probably Farmers.

L. MILLS: Yes Farmers, I actually have the proof of insurance in the car because that's what I used to get in to see the cats.

SCHNAIDT: Do you have that information? Can I get that? You mentioned you had other properties in Kelseyville, or?

P. MILLS: Well, when my mother died I bought some rentals. I have a few rentals. I'm retired.

SCHNAIDT: Ok. Where did you retire from if you don't mind me asking?

P. MILLS: I worked thirty years for the timber industry.

SCHNAIDT: Have you always lived in Mendocino County?

P. MILLS: Since 1997.

SCHNAIDT: Where did you come from?

P. MILLS: San Francisco.

SCHNAIDT: Oh, wow.

L. MILLS: It's not there.

P. MILLS: We're quite upset with what we see in the press and feel a bit manipulated because they've been calling us and when Laura went to see the cats yesterday, there were two people dressed in, it looked like CAL FIRE guys, and the first thing they did was shove a microphone in Laura's face and so now of course we read all the stuff in the paper. It's been quite interesting because even in the paper the next door neighbor said he saw the fire in the grass. He said he saw it burn into the woodpile. So we just don't know. We're hoping that you guys will shed some light. We're afraid that somebody is going to read that and because of their losses they're going to seek revenge.

L. MILLS: We're afraid that somebody is going to see that the house is still standing and come burn it down. Like, these guys started the fire and their house is standing and mine's gone.

SCHNAIDT: A vengeance deal.

L. MILLS: Yeah.

SCHNAIDT: The news, they just, they drive around, they see things and interpret them as they see it.

L. MILLS: CAL FIRE has been good because all the things that we've read so far, CAL FIRE says you have to realize that investigations take a long time, and the cause of the fire is not always the obvious. CAL FIRE has been very good.

SCHNAIDT: Good, ok, thank you.

L. MILLS: There's a guy named Dan Berlant or Dave Berlant, he's really good.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, and that's basically where it's at now, is there is an investigation, we haven't determined what the cause is yet, we're just asking questions about the property and going from there. We asked all the homeowners in the area questions and so until we actually produce a statement the news kind of makes up their own ideas.

P. MILLS: Can we offer you a beverage?

SCHNAIDT: Thank you but I'm ok. So that insurance info?

L. MILLS: It's not in the car, but I do know we have an active policy with Farmers because I just went and got the thing yesterday.

SCHNAIDT: We can figure that out. When was the last time you were on the property?

P. MILLS: Last time I was there, I was asked to leave by CAL FIRE about 3:00 P.M. on Saturday. Is that right Laura?

L. MILLS: I don't know, I think it was more like, well 4:30.

SCHNAIDT: Then before that day, how about that?

P. MILLS: I can't remember if I spent the night there or not.

L. MILLS: It had been a few days that we had not been there but Cindy had been down at her daughter's house, they just had a grandbaby.

P. MILLS: So this was Saturday. I went there at 7:00 Saturday morning to feed the cats.

SCHNAIDT: Then you mentioned going there with your daughter just recently?

L. MILLS: With my friend, Annie.

SCHNAIDT: Annie.

L. MILLS: We went there yesterday.

SCHNAIDT: Ok yesterday. And that's Annie, last name?

L. MILLS: Do you need, I mean?

SCHNAIDT: Sure, yeah. Just a name would be...

L. MILLS: Annie Sheldenberg.

P. MILLS: This was with a police escort.

L. MILLS: But the interesting thing is that when we got there there was some newspeople there, but there was no escort.

SCHNAIDT: That's what I hear.

L. MILLS: It didn't dawn on me then, I was just trying to get the cat. Then later, I was like, wait a minute, everybody on this mountain has gone with escorts, what are these guys doing here? They were just dinking around.

P. MILLS: I wouldn't say they were dinking around they had their cameras.

L. MILLS: Well, I mean, it wasn't like they had just gotten there.

P. MILLS: They were conducting their own investigation.

SCHNAIDT: The freedom of the press. They can actually go past the blockages. They don't need permission. If I kept them from doing their job, that would be all on me actually. When was the last time someone did any open burning on the property?

P. MILLS: I can't say. I would say probably it would have to have been in 2014. I'd have to ask John, but it would have been during the winter.

L. MILLS: Yeah but he wasn't here last winter, so it would have been before then.

P. MILLS: Yeah, I can't say.

SCHNAIDT: That's fine.

L. MILLS: Not this year.

P. MILLS: You know we cut the grass and make sure everything is tidy.

SCHNAIDT: Sure, and that's important in that area. Any reason why someone would start a fire on your property?

P. MILLS: Not that we know of, what do you mean?

SCHNAIDT: Anything, campfire, maliciously, any neighbor disputes?

P. MILLS: No.

SCHNAIDT: You get along with all the neighbors?

P. MILLS: Yeah.

SCHNAIDT: There's no campfire pits or anything like that?

P. MILLS: No. We don't BBQ. We don't have a BBQ.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, then the debris burning, you mentioned that already.

P. MILLS: I have a dump trailer and I routinely you know go to the dump, so we throw everything in that's not being used and we take it to the recycler so, it's not like we store everything up and then...

SCHNAIDT: So yeah you take all your debris off to the dump.

L. MILLS: Parker has a fetish taking things away.

P. MILLS: I wouldn't say that, but...

SCHNAIDT: We already covered how long you've owned it, which is since 2009, late 2009. Any electrical issues reported with the residence?

P. MILLS: No.

SCHNAIDT: Power outages, anything like that?

P. MILLS: Not, you know from time to time there have been power outages that have occurred, but it's real...

SCHNAIDT: Ok, and with the house itself any fixtures acting up? Any electrical burn smells, anything like that?

P. MILLS: No, we would be very aware of anything.

L. MILLS: Yeah, the house is fine.

P. MILLS: The house is new. You know it's filled with smoke alarms and circuit breakers and, and you know all the smoke alarms are hard wired together so when it goes off they all go.

L. MILLS: And they go off. They work. Toast. They're a little too sensitive.

SCHNAIDT: One of our stations is like that too. Always trying to figure which battery is getting low.

L. MILLS: Well when we have toast, we have to use blankets and start airing windows, so they work. But the house is, you haven't been there?

SCHNAIDT: I drove by it and it looks new.

L. MILLS: The house is fine.

SCHNAIDT: There was a circuit that ran to the oak tree behind the house, what was it for?

P. MILLS: That was for a motion sensing light.

SCHNAIDT: Motion sensing light. Ok. When was that installed?

P. MILLS: Oh, 2014.

SCHNAIDT: By who?

P. MILLS: By John.

SCHNAIDT: There was an above ground extension cord from the hot tub connectd to a junction box by a metal pole near the oak tree. When was it put in?

P. MILLS: Say that again? Because there's two, we were going to move the hot tub, by the side of the house, so it was wired into a breaker in the box and we were preparing to move it, so if that wire there, that's what that's for. That was not an active wire.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, so move the hot tub from which location?

P. MILLS: It's on the north side of the house. On the deck.

L. MILLS: The side deck.

SCHNAIDT: So it was moved there from another location, or you were going to move it?

P. MILLS: We were going to move it.

SCHNAIDT: You were going to move it. Then was the hot tub there with the house?

P. MILLS: No.

SCHNAIDT: You guys bought that and installed it?

P. MILLS: Yeah.

SCHNAIDT: When was that put in?

P. MILLS: 2013.

SCHNAIDT: Where did you buy it from?

P. MILLS: Used. It quit working so we haven't been using it.

SCHNAIDT: When did it quit working?

P. MILLS: Sometime when we were gone, over the winter. So it's shut off, has been for a long time.

L. MILLS: It hasn't been used in months.

P. MILLS: Yeah, it hasn't been used in months.

SCHNAIDT: Ok. You were going to move it from it's location on the deck to where?

P. MILLS: Back there by the garden, we call it the bridge. We were going to pour a little slab, a little place back there.

SCHNAIDT: Garden by the bridge.

P. MILLS: Yeah and that's where the wire was that you saw, or someone saw.

SCHNAIDT: So where the wire is located is where the hot tub was going to go?

P. MILLS: Yeah.

SCHNAIDT: So the extension cord from the hot tub is connected to the junction box by the metal pole.

P. MILLS: Not sure what the metal pole is.

SCHNAIDT: Let's see, by the oak tree, there's a metal pole. And...

P. MILLS: Oh it could have been maybe an old satellite. I don't know what that would be. Maybe it was an old satellite dish or something like that.

SCHNAIDT: So the extension cord was installed in 2013.

P. MILLS: Well, I mean what we're talking about, the wire that I know about was like a number 4 wire to the hot tub, it was sized by an electrician. But I'm not sure, that was the one that is connected up to, now I'm not sure which wire you're referring to. The one that went out into the...

SCHNAIDT: I want to say it was a black extension cord.

P. MILLS: Well we wouldn't run the hot tub off an extension cord.

SCHNAIDT: Well yeah, like a black cable.

P. MILLS: Ok, yeah I'm sure that's what that is.

SCHNAIDT: What electrician installed it? A company or?

P. MILLS: No I think it was done by Mr. Pinch.

SCHNAIDT: Do you know who built the house and what year it was built?

P. MILLS: It was owner built, I don't remember what his name was.

L. MILLS: It was owner built and it was a foreclosure. His name was Ron Daly. Somebody asked me that today.

SCHNAIDT: What year was it, I'm sorry?

P. MILLS: You know, I don't know when they started. Probably, 2005, 2006, somewhere in there.

SCHNAIDT: Ok. That's fine. It's really just gathering data so whatever information you can provide and then it just gets filtered through from there. The electrical work, it's John Pinch and then any other electrical contractors or people?

P. MILLS: Well I mean we've had a couple of electrical contractors in there just doing odds and ends when we were remodeling the house. I don't remember their names. They were licensed contractors.

SCHNAIDT: When was that?

P. MILLS: Early on, during the remodel, 2009.

SCHNAIDT: Is there a way to get their contact info, like receipts or anything like that?

P. MILLS: We could try.

SCHNAIDT: If you don't mind.

L. MILLS: I think John or Cindy would know.

P. MILLS: You know when you talk to Mr. Pinch you can ask him.

SCHNAIDT: He might have receipts or something? Ok. Do you have like a house file that you keep or?

P. MILLS: That's her department.

SCHNAIDT: Anything else that you can think of as far as?

P. MILLS: No, I mean I'm curious that you're focusing on the house where everybody else seems to be focusing on the outside; and since the house didn't burn, again I don't know how these investigations work.

SCHNAIDT: The way it is, it's probably down to that area. There's an investigation team, they go in and they kind of focus on a general area and...

P. MILLS: Well we saw, when Laura drove in, we saw this very wide area up behind the house.

L. MILLS: Before you get to the house.

P. MILLS: Up the hill all blocked off.

L. MILLS: With red and white tape.

SCHNAIDT: The red and white tape would be a hazard flagging but generally they do take a big area like you're saying, and they look at all the possible...

L. MILLS: Is that like the hazard flagging would be for the people who were going to be running around investigating so they didn't get hurt themselves?

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, exactly. Powerlines are a big one, so basically, and the firefighters running around at night, mopping up, so they don't just walk into a powerline. Even though power is out in the neighborhood, sometimes generators will kick on and backfeed or PG&E will energize and we don't know it and those lines become active and you can walk right into them.

So we try to flag any hazard or anything that can hurt a crew, it's basically a job site, and then you just make that job site safe with that flagging. But with the investigation they take that general large idea and look at all the possible ignition factors in that and then it's a matter of just ruling them out. So the house, the electrical, burnpiles, neighbor disputes, stuff like that. That's where they go from there.

P. MILLS: Yeah because from my observations, and I don't know what you saw, there's a woodshed and there's a toolshed and it was pretty obvious to me that that the woodshed caught the toolshed on fire instead of going the other way and you would think if the fire had started in the toolshed that the toolshed would have burned up, but it just burned on one end. That had power to it. The woodshed was just a woodshed, it had some firewood and there was a lawnmower stored in there and a couple empty gas cans. Firewood and was some lumber behind it. I hadn't really thought about this because I wasn't involved in this stuff, I would assume it would run to the circuit breaker and the circuit breaker was off. I mean we don't know. That's certainly something you guys are welcome to come take a look at.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, I'm sure the investigation team is on that. Yeah, that circuit, it's mainly who was installing it and all that. So, the hot tub itself, yeah, it's just who installed that extension cord or the cord and they just look at that. So they might be back out and asking you some questions about that. So thank you for having me out here. I appreciate it. If you have any questions just contact me.

P. MILLS: Well you know, you can imagine, I don't know how many hundreds of millions of dollars of damage this has caused and someone lost their life and all this other stuff, you know. We read stuff in the newspaper and it's pretty intimidating. So we don't really know what to do.

L. MILLS: Actually there's a picture of our house in the paper.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, where do you go from here.

P. MILLS: What happens in this situation. That would be my question to you, maybe you can't answer those questions...

SCHNAIDT: Right, and I can only answer to the extent that the cause hasn't been determined and that's what the investigation is for. And that's what I would tell them, we don't know.

L. MILLS: Yeah, the news guy says to me, are you aware that this toolshed is being considered as the probable cause for this fire?

SCHNAIDT: Right. We look at everything. We look at the powerlines, we look at debris piles.

P. MILLS: Yeah, yeah, you should.

SCHNAIDT: So, exactly.

P. MILLS: I've lived here on this ridge for forty years and we've seen lots of houses have burned down, the only thing we could think of was that somebody had put a crystal there. I don't know.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, refraction. Sure, they look at everything. That's what the investigation is about, is to give everybody a fair shake at what's going on. Then it's the criminal deal that goes to court and if it's civil it goes to court and then a judge listens to both sides and it goes from there. It's never just here's your bill, here's what's going on. So, and that's just from my end. So I'll figure out who the lead investigator is, there's a whole team.

P. MILLS: How long might this take?

SCHNAIDT: The investigation? I don't know. I can try to get some answers for you. It could take weeks or months, but that's a good question for the lead investigator. So, I can...

P. MILLS: I mean if they find something that's so blatantly obvious, we would like to know that. We don't want to wait. I mean I guess we don't have any control. I mean that's probably what you should tell me, is that it's out of your hands.

SCHNAIDT: That's definitely it. There is a lead investigator that will be running the investigation at one single point that you can talk to.

P. MILLS: Good, that would be great because.

L. MILLS: Who is that, do you know?

SCHNAIDT: I don't know yet.

P. MILLS: He says for now it's him. We're very responsible, caring people and we would like to either, if we can't participate, we would certainly like to be appraised of the situation.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, you just find yourself in the paper and...

P. MILLS: Well sure. If we find out that it's, I mean unfortunately if we find out that the cause was the powerlines or some neighbor with a lawnmower or all these things we've heard about.

L. MILLS: Should we tell him about Jamie's conversation with this maintenance guy?

P. MILLS: Oh yeah, so we didn't know quite what to do. Laura was there.

L. MILLS: Hey Annie are you here? No. So anyway we were waiting in line for the pet rescue escort service and there are several of us friends that were in the same line so one of our friends, oh there's Annie.

SCHNAIDT: Hi I'm John.

A. SHELDENBERG: Hi.

L. MILLS: So, Annie, this is like fifth hand right? So this guy, his name was Chip Whitehead, so he talked to Jamie and then Jamie told Annie. So Jamie said that this guy said he was like, he said like I know how it started.

A. SHELDENBERG: He was landscaping when it happened.

L. MILLS: I don't know that he was doing it, but he was there and there was somebody mowing a lawn. He said it was like some big white, he called it a mansion, like a huge house, and he said it was near the fire chief's house. Which would be Jim Wright? So it was near Jim Wright's house and it was on [REDACTED]. And he said the lawnmower sparked and it started this fire and that they tried to get it out. Yeah, they were trying to get it out and it got out of control. So, then Jamie gave this guy's name to the fire chief, because Cindy had been contacted by somebody from CDF. She said the fire chief, I don't know who it was. So anyway Cindy had been contacted and she asked Jamie to contact him. You know she said well would you talk to this guy directly, because he's been asking me questions and I don't know anything. Cindy was in Santa Clara. So Jamie told this guy this. Then Jamie found his number online, did a Google or something and found his number, so he called him today and he said you know, I'm the guy that you were talking to yesterday, and he said he changed his story completely. He said I never told you that and he threatened him. So it was like, oh.

SCHNAIDT: Wow, no kidding?

L. MILLS: Yeah, so...

SCHNAIDT: Do you have his information or?

A. SHELDENBERG: Yeah.

L. MILLS: Did you get it? You didn't get the number did you?

A. SHELDENBERG: No just his name.

SCHNAIDT: Ok, it's worth running down everything.

L. MILLS: I think Jamie Googled his cell phone.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah you can find a lot of stuff on Google.

L. MILLS: He had a landscaping logo on his truck and he was waiting in line for the pet rescue as well.

SCHNAIDT: He helped extinguish the fire that was ignited by the lawnmower?

L. MILLS: He said they tried and they couldn't, it got out of hand.

A. SHELDENBERG: He has magnets on his truck, so I think it said, Jamie thinks it said C. Whitehead Landscaping. I just remember seeing Whitehead Landscaping was on the truck.

L. MILLS: But it was out of Petaluma. So anyway, he said, Jamie talked to him and he said that he grew up here, I think he's working in Petaluma now but he grew up here. I don't know how old the guy was.

A. SHELDENBERG: Would you like Jamie's number?

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, if you don't mind.

A. SHELDENBERG: He would be more helpful.

L. MILLS: I think he was a little shaken that this guy threatened him.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, and we'll look into it all.

L. MILLS: So Jamie will probably be a little uncomfortable. I think he's pretty shaken.

A. SHELDENBERG: He was just behind him in line when we were lining up around there yesterday waiting to go up to get our pets. So Jamie was just behind him so they started chatting and then he said something like he was kind of bragging or just, he said he was nervous but he seemed to be like, yeah we know how it started. Ok, here's Jamie's number.

P. MILLS: So John, things are ramping up. That was Mike Thompson and he's in Santa Rosa and he's contacted John who is going to get here at 8:00 tonight and he wants to interview John tonight. So he's leaving Santa Rosa to come here, and he says please call him.

SCHNAIDT: For me to call him?

A. SHELDENBERG: That's Jamie's number, [REDACTED].

SCHNAIDT: And that's Jamie and...

A. SHELDENBERG: So he's the one that spoke firsthand to this guy. He spoke directly to him so he can...

SCHNAIDT: So he spoke to Chip and Chip said he saw a mower on fire.

A. SHELDENBERG: The mower spark and then...

L. MILLS: He said that, I don't know if he saw the mower spark or, he knew that there was somebody lawnmowing and it sparked the fire and they tried to put it out.

A. SHELDENBERG: Then I have other friends who were over at the fire chief's house when the fire started and they ran up onto the ridge and they were trying to put it out just so, to protect his house.

SCHNAIDT: So Chip said he tried to put out a mower sparked fire at a house that was next door to the chief's house?

A. SHELDENBERG: Or neighbor of, because we were talking about the word neighbor, doesn't always mean next door.

L. MILLS: He said it was a big white house on [REDACTED] right? He called it a mansion.

A. SHELDENBERG: Yeah, on [REDACTED].

SCHNAIDT: Ok. We'll look into it.

A. SHELDENBERG: Do you know where the fire chief Jimmy Wright's house is?

SCHNAIDT: I don't.

A. SHELDENBERG: His house is very visible and behind it there is like a little hillside so what John was saying is they ran up the hill because they could see it billowing

and they took hoses up there. I was thinking Jimmy Wright would be good to talk to as well because that was right where it started.

SCHNAIDT: He can always describe the area, I bet he was out working.

A. SHELDENBERG: Well he was at home because my friends were over visiting with him when it started.

SCHNAIDT: Ok. Yeah, it's worth looking into. We'll look into every factor. I'll get down the hill and call Mike and...

P. MILLS: You can call him right here if you want to, not a problem.

SCHNAIDT: Ok.

P. MILLS: Cell phones don't work very well.

SCHNAIDT: Well I can get going and see what Mike wants and head on down the hill.

P. MILLS: Where are you headed, are you going to back to Willits?

SCHNAIDT: I'll go to our Woodland station where we're at, that way if he's saying it's going to be a couple of hours or...

L. MILLS: He didn't tell him to stay here he just told him to call him right?

SCHNAIDT: Call him right?

P. MILLS: Yeah, I don't know what he wants you to do.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, so let's do it that way.

P. MILLS: He sounded a bit aggressive over the telephone.

L. MILLS: Not aggressive, you mean urgent?

P. MILLS: No, who knows, very different than John. John has been very polite. He understands that we're stressed out.

SCHNAIDT: Well, you're good people.

P. MILLS: I'm sort of curious as to why another guy wants to speak to someone else and it's not you. That's, you know my radar is up a little bit. But that's ok, I mean you guys do whatever you want.

SCHNAIDT: I know he's involved with, he's out of region and so he's probably on the investigation team, whereas I'm just a small part of it. I went out to the scene early on and then I'm back here.

P. MILLS: Did you see anything that caught your attention?

SCHNAIDT: No.

P. MILLS: That's an honest question so...

SCHNAIDT: No, so I looked at it initially and I thought woodshed sure, there's burn piles, like unburned piles and then there's a burned one that the fire had done, I'm sure. Then anywhere behind the house in there I'd say and that's where I went with it.

L. MILLS: Somewhere behind the house?

SCHNAIDT: So that's where I would say, yeah. I was there in the first few hours of it.

P. MILLS: So what could cause, what could ignite a fire behind there?

SCHNAIDT: Oh it could be anything. I was looking at the powerlines, it could be electrical stuff, it could be the debris pile escaping, could be someone, like I said a neighbor dispute.

P. MILLS: I mean none of us smoke cigarettes, you know, none of that.

SCHNAIDT: No, and I don't want to even go down that route because I was initially there and so these guys are the investigators and they probably spent more time, so I don't want to give any false ideas.

L. MILLS: Because when we got there around 2:30 or so, so probably an hour...

SCHNAIDT: An hour after the start.

L. MILLS: It had started an hour earlier, it seemed like it had burned down the hill and got to the woodpile and then the woodpile torched the toolshed. But I don't know, the first responders, they were there and I thought perhaps that they kept the toolshed from burning, but I don't know, you all have talked a lot to them I'm sure.

P. MILLS: They were being very careful. I went around with a garden hose until the power went off you know putting out hot spots.

SCHNAIDT: Ok.

P. MILLS: Which they didn't want to do because they were trying to save water. I took them up to Calpine, the power plant up there, because I knew that there was water up there.

SCHNAIDT: You always want to use water sparingly in case you have to get down the bulk of the fire but you don't mop up or anything until you know the fire has stopped.

P. MILLS: She's on a cell phone, if you want to call Mr. Thompson, you know feel free.

SCHNAIDT: Don't worry about it, I'll go down to Woodlands, and that way.

P. MILLS: Woodlands?

SCHNAIDT: Woodlands, that's a Mendocino town. Up the hill, up Little Lake Road. So I'll go there and figure it out and see what he's thinking, because...

P. MILLS: So when should I call you?

SCHNAIDT: Whenever you'd like. But, I'd say give me a day and I'll start asking who's running it and any other information I can get. So I'm not the lead, I'm just a gopher really, so yeah call me up and I can get you a good number and person to talk to.

P. MILLS: That's fine.

SCHNAIDT: And then they can get you more answers.

P. MILLS: Ok, great.

SCHNAIDT: Well thank you for inviting me into your home. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

L. MILLS: Thanks a lot.

P. MILLS: So when you talk to Mike, you might give him some instructions and directions. I tried to give him some directions.

SCHNAIDT: Oh for the way in?

P. MILLS: He's going to be coming from Boonville. He's got to go beyond the driveway and turn around and come back. It's going to be dark by the time he gets here.

SCHNAIDT: Should be fun for him. So Mike is coming here?

P. MILLS: Well that's what he told me, he said he had talked to John Pinch who was in Nice, and that John was coming here and he wanted the address because he was coming. But if you could help him get here.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah you bet.

P. MILLS: You know, give him, he called me on this phone I think, yeah, so that's fine, because sometimes the cell phones don't work and he could spend a lot of time driving around.

SCHNAIDT: Yeah, ok. It's funny, I missed it too and I've been working here for eleven years.

P. MILLS: Well thank you.

SCHNAIDT: Well thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

**END OF INTERVIEW**