

Michael Taylor-Noonan

From: taylornoonan [michael@taylornoonan.com]
Sent: June 28, 2004 9:11 AM
To: mike@taylornoonan.com
Subject: Fwd: The Province - More Info on Toxic Bus

--- In Transit-Vancouver@yahoogroups.com, John Wollenzin <wollenzin@t...> wrote:

This story adds a bit more information. Turns out the substance was also found on the seats as well. Initial reports said the substance was found in the filters for the ventilation system...that ones that may get changed every six months if you are lucky.

Also of interest is a reporter's question as to whether or not the person who released the substance would not get quite ill from the direct contact. The response from Police was a glib "How long can you hold your breath for?". I guess a simple "I don't know" would not suffice.

An odd smell was noticed when the bus reached Downtown, and the Driver was the one who found the bag of pine cones. Only four people were hospitalized, the Driver, a passenger (who had at least 15 minutes of direct exposure) and the Paramedics (who had a very short exposure).

Still many things that do not add up either way. It certainly casts the idea of a psychosomatic illness in doubt, but makes little sense from a terrorist point of view either. The guy who did it could have been crazy, but the logistics still don't work out.

One final note, I looked up the MSDS for Methyl Chloride at the Scott Chemical website (<http://www.scotecatalog.com/>). Lethal concentration is 8300 ppm (parts per million), this will kill a rat in one hour. The EPA says the odour threshold is 10 ppm. The concentration found on the bus was 27 ppm.

>Police confirm bus incident was genuine chemical attack
>Tests determine that toxic methyl chloride, not
>mass hysteria, sent four people to hospital
>
>Matthew Ramsey
>The Province
>
>Sunday, June 27, 2004
>
>"The attack was real."
>
>With those four words, Vancouver police Insp.
>Chris Beach confirmed that it was a chemical
>attack -- the first of its kind in Vancouver --
>that sent a bus driver and three others to
>hospital in May.
>
>Beach also put to rest earlier speculation that

>the victims had fallen prey to mass hysteria, a
>theory floated when initial testing for toxic
>compounds on the bus came back negative.
>
>Police are now investigating how the only known
>suspect in the May 25 attack was able to get his
>hands on methyl chloride, a toxic gas used in
>industrial manufacturing, silicone production
>and chemical laboratories.
>
>Methyl chloride can be fatal in high concentrations.
>
>"We are as certain as we can be that it was
>distributed on the bus," Beach said.
>
>What police aren't certain about is how the gas
>was introduced on to the 98 B-Line bus
>travelling from Richmond to Vancouver that day,
>or why, or by whom.
>
>"There's an awful lot of places [that use it]
>and an awful lot of people that would have
>access," Beach said.
>
>Police have spoken to victims of the poisoning
>and say they were relieved to learn their woes
>weren't imaginary.
>
>The psychosomatic theory was especially
>difficult for police to swallow, considering
>that both paramedics affected were highly
>experienced, added investigator Det. Const.
>Rodger Shephard.
>
>Blood samples taken from all victims on the day
>of the exposure will now be tested for methyl
>chloride, but given the time that has passed,
>there is a good chance nothing will be found,
>Shephard said.
>
>Dr. Robert Lockhart, director of Vancouver-based
>Vizon Scitec, the company that did testing on
>the bus, said trace amounts of methyl chloride
>were discovered in tests of air filters at the
>front of the vehicle, and in swabs from seats.
>
>RCMP tests were not sensitive enough to pick up
>the chemical agent, Beach said.
>
>"We found a trace -- a trace," Lockhart noted,
>adding that a one-per-cent concentration of
>methyl chloride in air is considered
>"immediately dangerous to human life."
>
>Vizon Scitec testing revealed the gas concentration at 27 parts per
million.
>
>Methyl chloride is a colourless gas with a
>faint, sweet odour noticeable at dangerous
>concentrations. Exposure symptoms include
>dizziness, nausea, convulsions and coma. The
>gas, which targets the central nervous and
>reproductive systems, can also cause liver and
>kidney damage.
>

>Asked if the man suspected in the gassing would
>have succumbed to the chemicals he is believed
>to have released, Shephard said he asked
>Lockhart the same question and "his response
>was, 'How long can you hold your breath?'"
>
>Beach said victims of the chemical attack should
>go to their doctor if they are concerned.
>
>The bus driver, two paramedics and a passenger
>were hospitalized with severe nausea after the
>driver noticed an odd smell on the bus when it
>hit downtown Vancouver.
>
>All of the victims were released from
>
>hospital the following day.
>
>The driver reported that a man getting off the
>bus at 49th and Granville had asked him how his
>day was going. When the driver replied his day
>had been fine, the man replied with words to the
>effect that it wouldn't be fine for long.
>
>The driver was able to describe the man for police sketch artists.
>
>He is described as non-Caucasian, of average
>height and build, aged 20 to 25, with short,
>dark hair and a thin moustache. He wore jeans
>and a blue windbreaker with multi-coloured
>sleeves. The man had been sitting in the front
>section of the bus, ahead of its articulated
>join.
>
>The bus stopped at the Waterfront station, where it was quarantined.
>
>Paramedics, who were not wearing protective
>gear, fell ill after they boarded the vehicle to
>treat the driver. Several dozen police officers,
>members of the media and paramedics were
>quarantined briefly.
>
>TransLink spokeswoman Susan Danard said the bus
>is now back in service after a thorough and
>professional decontamination.
>
>TransLink is also reviewing emergency response
>protocols and advising drivers and passengers to
>be especially vigilant, she said.
>
>Danard said it would be "very difficult" to
>install sensors capable of picking up chemicals
>like methyl chloride, noting that it took
>investigators themselves weeks to isolate the
>compound.
>
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>
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