




TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
Office of the Inspector General
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Name: Wilson C. McArthur
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McArthur, who is aware of the identity of the interviewing agent, was contacted at his office and interviewed regarding Gary Fiser's reduction-in-force (RIF) and issues raised in Fiser's subsequent Department of Labor (DOL) complaint. McArthur provided the following information.

In March 1992, Fiser, the SQN Chemistry Manager, "swapped" positions with Bill Jocher, the Corporate Chemistry Manager, for a one-year temporary assignment. Prior to the swap, Jocher and the Nuclear Safety Review Board (NSRB) had identified problems (some long-term) in the SQN Chemistry Program while Fiser was serving in another temporary position as the Outage Manager. According to McArthur, Fiser was looked at as the one who caused the problems. During one NSRB meeting, Tom McGrath, an NSRB team member, left the meeting very upset and went to speak with Rob Beecken, the SQN Plant Manager. Soon after, Beecken contacted McArthur and said that he wanted Jocher to come to SQN as the site Chemistry Manager.

Jocher and McArthur were very upset about the possibility of Fiser becoming the Corporate Chemistry Manager. They spoke with Dan Keuter, Vice President, Nuclear Operations Services, about their concerns and explained that Fiser did not know secondary water chemistry and had bad management skills. However, Keuter insisted that they give Fiser a chance as the Corporate Chemistry Manager.

Investigation On: January 10, 1994

At: Chattanooga, Tennessee

By: SA Beth B. Thomas

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About 3 months after Fiser began serving as the Corporate Chemistry Manager, McArthur prepared Fiser's service review and it was "the worst performance appraisal I've ever written." McArthur believes the deck may have been stacked against Fiser because two of the three Program Managers in Corporate Chemistry had been recruited by Jocher. In addition, Fiser did not have any boiling water chemistry experience.

Between 3 and 6 months into Fiser's term as Corporate Chemistry Manager, McArthur told Keuter that Fiser was not working out. Kueter told McArthur to make any changes that he (McArthur) felt were necessary. As a result, McArthur demoted Fiser to a Program Manager position and named Sam Harvey (also a Program Manager) as the Acting Corporate Chemistry Manager. McArthur stated that the demotion was "definitely my idea." McArthur indicated that, although Fiser was not happy with the demotion, he (Fiser) did not make an issue of it.

McArthur cannot recall being told by Keuter to lower Fiser's ranking on a list used to determine which employees receive monetary bonuses or to place Fiser in a position where he would receive no increase. McArthur stated that it was possible that Keuter may have directed him to take this action; however, McArthur cannot remember. According to McArthur, Kueter was dissatisfied with Fiser only after McArthur complained about his (Fiser's) performance.

Toward the end of the swap (approximately March 1993), there was some indication that Jocher wanted to stay at SQN. Since Beecken had already told McArthur that SQN management did not want Fiser back, McArthur felt like Gordon Rich, a prospective employee/former Chemistry Manager from Trojan Nuclear Plant, could take over as the Corporate Chemistry Manager. In addition, Don Adams, a Corporate Program Manager, was considering going to SQN which would have allowed Fiser to continue in Corporate as a Program Manager.

McArthur initially stated that Beecken first told him in March 1993 that the site did not want Fiser back. However, when questioned regarding Fiser's statement that McArthur told him as early as November 1992, McArthur acknowledged that he could not specifically recall when he first found out about the site not wanting Fiser back, but he does know that it was Beecken who first told him. Beecken never gave a reason as to why Fiser was not being allowed to return, nor did he indicate that Fiser had done something to upset him.

During a meeting at the SQN turbine building, Beecken told McArthur that Fiser had come to see him after the decision had been made that Fiser would not be returning as the SQN Chemistry Manager. Beecken then told McArthur that he (Beecken) had certain things that he was concerned about with Fiser. However, Beecken did not elaborate as to what type of things.

Fiser's Reduction-in-Force

Around March 1993, McArthur attended two meetings with Keuter and Joe Bynum, Vice President, Nuclear Operations. In one of these meetings (specific date unknown), Bynum told McArthur to terminate Jocher and to put Fiser in the employee transition program (ETP). According to McArthur, Bynum specifically said to put Fiser in ETP, but did not indicate which position Fiser was to be RIF'ed from. McArthur stated that he "assumed" that Bynum meant from the SQN Chemistry Manager position because Fiser was on loan from that position; however, Bynum "didn't make it clear."

According to McArthur, it was Kent's decision not to have a site Chemistry Manager. However, McArthur would say that the actual organization in SQN Chemistry was "up in the air" when Fiser was RIF'ed.

McArthur stated that it did not "seem logical" to RIF Fiser because there was potentially a slot (Adam's position) open if Adams decided to go to SQN. McArthur advised that he told Bynum that Fiser could fill Adams' position, but Bynum said to put Fiser in ETP.

McArthur admitted that he does not have the "foggiest idea" of why Bynum wanted Fiser put into ETP. However, a couple of times before Bynum issued his directive, he (Bynum) had commented that Fiser had done a good job as the Outage Manager, but did not do well as a Chemistry Manager.

McArthur assumes that Ben Easley, Human Resource Officer, Operations Services, handled the RIF since Fiser was currently working in the Corporate organization.

McArthur acknowledged that he cannot really recall specific details about Fiser's RIF because he (McArthur) was more concerned with Jocher's situation.

McArthur stated that Bynum was under a lot of stress about this time (March 1993) and would often give people contradictory information. McArthur further stated that it got to the point where he and other managers would generally not take action on one of Bynum's directives unless it was written down. However, McArthur advised that there is no documentation regarding Bynum telling McArthur to put Fiser in ETP.

The Attempt to Re-hire Fiser as the SQN Chemistry Manager

Not long after Fiser was sent to ETP, Kent told McArthur that he (Kent) wanted to hire Fiser as the SQN Chemistry Manager. McArthur believes that Fiser had already been interviewed by Ken Powers, the new SQN Plant Manager. McArthur further believes that Kent spoke with him (McArthur) about hiring Fiser on the advice of Robert Fenech, the new SQN Site Vice President. McArthur told Kent that he would support the decision to hire Fiser, but that Kent needed to check with "everyone." McArthur does not know who else Kent spoke with about hiring Fiser.

McArthur stated that he only talked with Kent and Fenech about hiring Fiser. McArthur had advised Fenech that Fiser was not a good performer and he (Fenech) needed to evaluate if they (SQN management) wanted Fiser as their lead Chemistry person. As a result, McArthur believes Fenech made the decision not to hire Fiser.

During the time that SQN was considering Fiser, McArthur did not tell Keuter or Bynum of the attempt to hire Fiser as the SQN Chemistry Manager. However, McArthur did tell Keuter after it was determined that Fiser would not be returning to SQN. McArthur does not believe that either Bynum or Keuter was involved in the decision to forego hiring Fiser as the SQN Chemistry Manager.
