



**ATHENS-LIMESTONE COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

1011 W. Market St. • Athens, Alabama 35611
(256) 232-2631 • Fax (256) 233-2682
Email ema@limestoneema.com

Spencer Black, Director

August 3, 2005

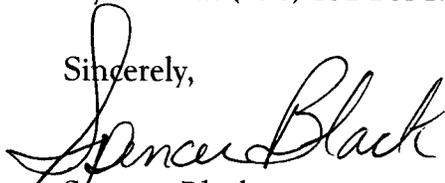
Roy Zimmerman
Director of Nuclear Security
11545 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Dear Mr. Zimmerman:

During the week of June 27, 2004, I met with Congressman Bud Cramer, Senator Richard Shelby's Office, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to discuss my issues concerning the Department of Homeland Security and the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. At the time of my visit, I was unable to make an appointment with your office to discuss these issues. Enclosed is a copy of my follow up letter to the above mentioned meeting with the issues and concerns that were discussed during my visit to Washington D.C.

If you have any questions or concerns to these issues, please feel free to contact myself or my office at (256) 232-2631.

Sincerely,


Spencer Black,
EMA Director



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August 3, 2005

Craig Conklin
Chief of Nuclear and Chemical Hazard Branch
FEMA REP Program
500 C. Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Mr. Conklin:

This letter is a follow up to the meeting I had with Vanessa Quinn on June 29, 2005 regarding my concerns for the Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant and the Department of Homeland Security.

Per our discussion on Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, we both agreed that TVA is a federal agency as is the U.S. Army, which conducts the CSEPP program. TVA should be held responsible in supplying all of the needs of the counties involved in the radiological emergency preparedness program, in order to provide for the protection of the citizens of Limestone County. One of my major concerns is the TVA warning sirens, which are located within a 10-mile radius of the nuclear plant. These sirens do not have battery backup power, which means that when a power outage occurs due to a weather event or man-made problems, the sirens will not sound. Should an event occur at the nuclear plant when there was a power outage, the residents would not be warned. In the event that our sirens failed to sound, our backup plan is to send deputies on alerting routes using sirens and loud speakers to warn the residents. Limestone County does not have enough law enforcement personnel or mobile sirens to do this efficiently. I believe that pressure should be placed on TVA to replace old sirens with new sirens with battery back-up.

I also feel the 10 mile Emergency Planning Zone should be expanded. I feel that all residents of Limestone County should receive information telling them what to do in the event of an emergency at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. Another concern is the lack of back-up power at the Reception and Mass Care Centers. We have four schools in Limestone County designated as Reception and Mass Care Centers. This is where evacuees would go to be monitored for radiation, and once decontaminated; the evacuees could stay in the Mass Care Centers at the schools. There could be three to four thousand people at each of these Reception Centers. What chaos there would be if there was a power failure. TVA's response to all of these inadequacies is that they meet the NRC requirements placed on them. This may be true, but I feel that TVA should go above and beyond what is required of them to keep the residents of Limestone County safe.

I am aware that nuclear power is being promoted by President Bush's Administration. I am in full support of Nuclear Power Plants, however, the requirements placed on Nuclear Power Plants to warn the public need to be reviewed and changes need to be made. NUREG - 0654 is the criteria that Nuclear Power Plants must follow. NUREG - 0654 was written in 1980 after the Three Mile Island incident and has never been revised. NRC and FEMA should be forced to do a complete revision of this document.

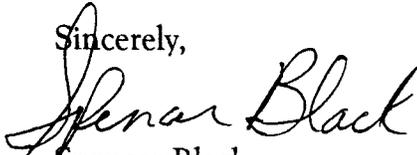
Limestone County is required to have a FEMA graded exercise every two years. In the past, these exercises have not been sufficient. Exercises should be used as an overall training tool to test emergency responders' knowledge and response time to an emergency. An exercise should not be used as a method of receiving a passing grade in order to meet FEMA and NRC requirements so the nuclear plant doesn't lose their operating license.

Another concern is the Public Safety Division at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. TVA did away with its own Public Safety Division due to budget restraints. TVA now hires a private contractor to handle security at the plant. Before TVA did away with their Public Safety Division, I felt security at the plant was at its highest point of proficiency with highly trained personnel.

I feel the Department of Homeland Security does not consider Nuclear Power Plants as a serious terrorist threat. I mentioned earlier my concerns regarding the security at the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. The Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant employs individuals from different nationalities working within and around the plant. Attached is a copy of the Giles Today news paper article Are we as safe as we think we are?, written by a reporter who staged her own mock assault at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant and TVA's response to the article.

I feel that your office is concerned as we are to assure that we provide the best services possible to ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens and first responders locally and throughout the State of Alabama. We solicit your assistance in resolving these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Spencer Black". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Spencer Black,
EMA Director

cc: Congressman Bud Cramer
Senator Richard Shelby
Senator Jeff Sessions
Vanessa Quinn, FEMA REP Program
Roy Zimmerman, Director of Nuclear Security
David Seibert, Limestone County Chairman



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Wednesday 14 January, 2004

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Are we as safe as we think we are?

By: JACQUE STEUBBEL, Staff Writer

January 07, 2004

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Reporter's mock attack sheds light on security at Giles County's biggest threat

Several months ago I wrote an article titled "Thinking the Unthinkable" about a meeting with city officials on Homeland Security and what was being done to protect Pulaski and Giles County.

The meeting consisted of Pulaski Fire Chief Jimmy Thompson, Police Chief John Reynolds and Harold Brooks, director of public works. Thompson remarked that, in the event of an attack, he was particularly concerned about our close proximity to Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. "Browns Ferry is only about 40 miles down the road," Thompson said. "It concerns me more than Redstone Arsenal."

I had forgotten about Browns Ferry. Totally forgotten. Lulled perhaps is the better word by our beautiful hill community and peaceful lifestyle. For the most part, we are a gentle community of people, friends and neighbors, who care about one another. In a real sense, we are family. Perhaps that is why I so much enjoy living in Giles County. It is, as the Chamber of Commerce says, God's country.

That said, I would like to keep and protect our way of life, but the comment about Browns Ferry stayed in the back of my mind, like a burr that keeps rubbing and itching.

Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant is on the north shore of Wheeler Reservoir in North Alabama. It was TVA's first nuclear power plant and the largest in the world when it began operation in 1974.

The two operating units at Browns Ferry are boiling water nuclear reactors. The units make electricity by splitting uranium atoms to produce steam, which is then piped to turbines that spin generators to produce electricity.

Contacted yesterday (Monday), Craig Beasley, spokesman for Browns Ferry, said units two and three each generate 1,150 megawatts of electricity which can supply 650,000 homes.

TVA has announced its intention to restart the long-idled unit one reactor which was shut down in 1985 due to safety concerns.

Beasley assured me that Browns Ferry is "protected against any conceivable attack." He told me plant security is provided by Pinkerton's Government Services.

"These are trained professionals," he said. "We have even increased the number of patrols they perform so that we have total controlled access to the site."

SECTION LINKS

- Daily Local News updates at WKSR.com



- State/Regional News
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Beasley also told me that frequent coordination with local, state and federal law enforcement is a "great benefit."

He said this level of protection "gives you a seamless web of protection." Along these same lines, he continued, "TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) works closely with the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and Office of Homeland Security."

Such security measures, Beasley said, "assure our plants are protected against any conceivable attack."

That wasn't what I found.

On New Year's Day, the very beginning of 2004, I decided to stage my own mock assault on Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant.

Nothing illegal was planned. My intent was to test the readiness and effectiveness of their security system, particularly on a day that America was supposedly on high alert.

Tom Ridge, the secretary of Homeland Security, had announced the danger of an attack in the "near term," was "perhaps greater now than at any point since Sept. 11, 2001."

Ridge said the decision to increase the level of alert to "high" came after intense consultations among intelligence agencies, which had picked up recent "chatter" about some unspecified but spectacular attack.

I borrowed a white van - which is certainly suspicious to begin with - filled it with boxes in the rear, which read "nuclear bomb detonator," "Stinger Missiles," "Grenade Launchers," "Grenades," "Dirty Bombs" and "explosives."

There was also a mysterious-looking long black canvas bag that was labeled "warheads." To further add to the scenario, I covered all of this mess with camouflage netting.

Accompanying me on my expedition was Gretchen, my large and faithful German shepherd. Another member of the expedition was a senior friend who was 83 and retired from the U.S. Department of Defense.

As a former employee of the government's once secret installation known as Mount Weather, I reasoned she would not only be savvy to good security but also serve as an excellent decoy, making us appear to be innocent and lost. We stopped in Rogersville, Ala., had lunch, and then I broke the news to my trusting friend.

"How would you like to participate in a possible news column," I asked as she munched peacefully on her hamburger.

"Sure!" she replied, then added, "Wait a minute; what are you up to?"

I stopped talking for a moment as the manager of Hardee's, carrying an armful of poinsettias, stopped by our table.

"Would you like these?" she asked. "They will just die here?"

"Certainly," I replied. "Thank you very much."

The poinsettias, I reasoned, would make a nice addition to my camouflaged "explosives."

I then faced my senior friend and continued the possible scenario.

"I want to test the security at Browns Ferry," I said. "We won't do anything illegal. That's a given. But I do want to see how quick they react to our presence."

"OK," she laughed, shaking her head.

Poinsettias tucked next to the box marked "nuclear detonator," we set forth on our great adventure. In my mind, I hoped it would fail and the system would work.

At the second light past the Elk River Bridge, we turned onto the two-lane blacktop that - some six miles down the road - led to Browns Ferry. Along the way we stopped at a gated community called Brigadoon and drove into the driveway of one of the beautiful homes with a "For Sale" sign.

I explained to my traveling companion that the close proximity to the plant would make it easy to launch a missile directly at the site from the balcony of the house. In fact, you would have to be blind to miss your target.

I then went out on the spacious wooden deck, looked down river at the plant and fired a photograph instead of a missile.

That was too easy but predictable. It was one o'clock and the big hurdle waited less than a mile down the road.

The first gate to Browns Ferry was fortified with heavy concrete barricades. It also had a Limestone County, Ala., police car at the entrance. The car's occupant, with his head down, appeared to be either reading or asleep. We drove by without so much as a glance from the officer.

The next entrance to Browns Ferry was also barricaded but no security. I drove a short distance around the barricade, parked the van and shot a photograph of the plant.

Respecting its detour sign, we continued on and entered the expanded perimeter of the plant.

Later, Beasley would tell me, "We have total controlled access to the site."

He would advise, "Every vehicle entering the expanded perimeter site has to stop and show identification ... some are even randomly searched."

There was no security. The guard post was empty. We drove into the first parking area, parked at the tree line and, instead of firing weapons, I took photographs.

We were not in violation of the law. There was no sign indicating photographs were forbidden or that we were trespassing. There was a sign warning "handguns" and "drugs" would be confiscated.

I wasn't worried since I had no drugs and no handguns. The only items I was carrying were boxes labeled nuclear warheads, detonators, dirty bombs, Stinger missiles, grenades and grenade launchers.

Actually, a Stinger alone would probably do the job. This is a man or woman-portable, shoulder-fired guided missile with a high-explosive warhead. It has a range of from one to eight kilometers.

Folks, by that time, had I been an actual terrorist, or had the van contained terrorists, Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant would be history with northern Alabama and both south central and Middle Tennessee showered with radioactive fallout.

In fairness, I should say that Beasley assured me that a nuclear plant couldn't explode.

"These plants are fortified by robust concrete containment structures," he said, "designed to protect everything inside the building."

Even before Sept. 11, 2001, he said, Browns Ferry was recognized as "one of the most secure industrial facilities in the nation."

Asked about the impact of a missile strike, Beasley responded, "I won't speculate on what will or will not happen."

Again such a heightened level of security was not what we encountered on Jan. 1, 2004.

My senior traveling companion, very accustomed to layers of strict government security, was shocked.

"I can't believe this," she said.

We continued to wait in the parking lot, although there was no sign forbidding entry or parking by outsiders.

I restarted the van and drove toward the Browns Ferry Nuclear Training School.

I deliberately chose this route because of the nuclear school and also because I saw what looked like a Jeep security car coming from the opposite direction. "Let's at least give these guys a chance," I told my friend. "Surely, we will be stopped."

Nothing. I continued on to the Nuclear Training School as the security officer passed me.

In the rear view mirror, I felt a sense of relief as I noticed him finally turning around.

"Good," I thought, although, again, if I were a real terrorist, the plant would have been long gone.

I pulled into an almost empty parking lot and deliberately chose a semi-secluded site at the far corner, facing the river and the woods.

I then got out of the van with my German shepherd on a leash. Nervous at that point, my friend stayed in the van.

The security officer pulled up, and I said "hello" in my best Tennessee accent.

I told the Pinkerton nuclear police officer truthfully that I was just giving my giant dog a walk.

"OK," he said, eyeing the dog cautiously. Then he asked: "Do you work here?"

"No, we just decided to go for a ride on New Year's. It is so pretty here."

"Well, you don't have any business being here then," he said. "This is not public property. You will need to leave after you walk the dog."

I told him we had entered through the open road and there was no sign forbidding entry. He agreed and nodded and said it was OK and everything was fine, but that we should leave after I finished walking my dog.

I smiled, thanked him and chuckled quietly that it wouldn't take me long to do what I had to do.

And it didn't. Actually, the walk was beautiful. The back of the Nuclear Training School faced the water and looked like a park. Down below, a man fished quietly from a boat. I hoped he was some type of security but knew that he wasn't anything more than a fisherman, hoping to catch some of the unusually large fish found around nuclear plants.

I covered the entire length of the long nuclear school building, about a 15-minute walk, and was coming out the other side when the security guard again pulled up.

That time he got out. Gretchen, now fully participating in the scenario, never made a sound.

"I am almost finished," I said, smiling. "It is just so pretty here."

I then asked him where Wheeler Lake State Park was.

He replied it was somewhere down near Rogersville. Then he told me that the facility (Brown's Ferry) was on high alert for terrorists.

"Are you serious?" I asked. "Do you have many problems here? It is so remote."

"Oh, we keep a tight facility," he said. "That's why we don't have any trouble."

He then recommended that "you best be leaving."

I thanked him, told him that I was a journalist - that point alone should have raised a red flag - and then said I had visited Browns Ferry some 30 years ago when it had just gone online.

"It certainly has changed," I said. He agreed although he was probably still wearing diapers at that point in history.

We talked briefly, and I said goodbye.

I have to say the security guard was very courteous. He was also very, very careless.

Although I think (actually, I hope!) he wrote down the license tag number, at no time did he ask me for my identification or name, nor did he look into the van, although the sign at the entrance of the plant warned vehicles could and would be searched.

There was certainly ample justification to take that added precaution.

I put my dog back into the van, climbed in myself and then managed to calm my senior friend who said she had gotten worried.

The guard did take the precaution of following us out of the facility until we reached the main road. Apparently satisfied that the terrorist threat had been met, he waited for a few minutes and then drove back onto the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant grounds.

In some respects, for him, it was the end of the story. For me, it was just the beginning. The young man had absolutely no way of knowing who or what we really were. He had no way of knowing what was in the van. Even a detector for explosives would not pick up the sophisticated plastique types, especially Semtex, that are now being used by terrorists worldwide.

It genuinely concerns me that on the day our nation was on high alert, we could waltz into the Browns Ferry Nuclear Power Plant facility and complete a simulated assault without being bothered until I deliberately attracted the attention of a very careless security guard.

It bothers me because my tax money is paying for so-called Homeland Security. I hope this column does cause Browns Ferry officials enough pain to heighten their security system into something that is real and workable, not Playskool toys.

I hope this happens because I live too near the plant not to be concerned. Had my attack been a real one, all those I care about, including myself, would probably be dead, maimed or certainly evacuated by now.

What? A nuclear plant can't explode and release radioactive particles? Just ask those who lived near Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union. The explosion at that nuclear plant released radiation, which killed between 7,000 and 10,000, and was roughly equivalent to the explosion of 1,000 Hiroshima bombs.

"What does it take to get noticed by security at a nuclear power plant? Browns Ferry is not an isolated case, as was found recently at a nuclear plant in Texas," replied Michele Boyd, legislative representative for Public Citizen in Washington, D.C.

"We are supposedly in a heightened terror alert," Boyd said, "but you wouldn't know it at the country's nuclear power plants."

Efforts to contact Ken Clark, NRC public spokesman at Region 2 in Atlanta, were not successful. He did not return the several phone messages that were left for him on his voice mail.

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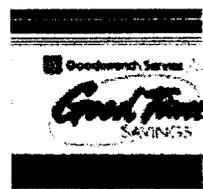
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Thursday 29 January, 2004



NEWS SEARCH

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Local News

Commentary: TVA responds to mock attack

By: SCOTT STEWART, Managing Editor

January 21, 2004

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Five gentlemen, who represented Tennessee Valley Authority and its security forces came to Pulaski last week to explain to us how serious Jacque Steubbel's article on Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant was considered by TVA.

They also wanted to reprimand us for presenting a possible danger to the people who work at the plant.

Gil Francis, media relations representative for TVA, started the two-hour meeting by telling us that "safety and security is our number one concern." He said that security is put foremost, and, he said, "that story was a serious matter."

Yes, the story is a serious matter. It is serious on many levels.

For TVA it is serious because they are now concerned that a copy cat "mock attack" could be staged. They believe that Jacque's actions and this newspaper's decision to print what she experienced has placed the people that work and travel near the facility in danger.

As for the people living in close proximity of Browns Ferry, including those of us in Giles County, it is serious because we expect the people who run Browns Ferry to take every precaution to ensure that we are safe - safe from accidents and safe from attacks by anyone.

Sure, we live on the electricity provided by the TVA, but we would prefer the electricity we use be produced without putting our families at risk.

The point Jacque and I tried to make to these gentlemen was that on a day when our country was on the second highest alert status many of us assumed that Browns Ferry would be safe from such attacks.

To the reporter who left Giles County with no preconceived notions, drove an unmarked van within what she considered to be close proximity of Browns Ferry and took pictures of what she experienced, it did not seem that the assumptions were true.

That is where we were wrong, according to Craig Beasley, spokesman for Browns Ferry.

He said Jacque never entered a "sensitive" area during her visit on New Year's Day. She was on a general access road and stopped her van in an area that employees and former employees visit on a daily basis.

So Jacque was in an open area?

Beasley said it is a general access area for employees, relatives and new employees to Browns Ferry. Jacque had stopped at a training center which is also near a health facility.

"The bottom line is that you did what you were supposed to be doing up there," Beasley said.

Beasley and Francis continued to emphasize the point that Jacque was outside

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the Browns Ferry security perimeter despite the fact that she passed an unmanned guard shack and was eventually stopped by a guard who told her she should leave before allowing her to stay for 10-15 more minutes.

Why was that guard shack unmanned?

Beasley said it was put in place immediately following 9/11. Since then, security measures at the plant have been adapted so that it is no longer an established check point.

"We use that during emergency preparedness, during other types of things when we are limiting access even further than what you and I talked about,"

Beasley said, referring to Jacque's call to him prior to writing her article.

He assured us that Browns Ferry security follows procedures that have been set down by technical experts and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

So, could Browns Ferry be attacked from where Jacque was? She had based a large portion of her story on the fact that a security guard told her she was not supposed to be there, but then allowed her to stay. Was she on public property?

Francis said that Jacque was in a general area, not a sensitive area.

"The bottom line is that it was a public road where people who have business, whether at the training center, credit union or parcel post, have utilized that access road to conduct their business," he said.

"So, you are telling me now that I can go into the nuclear school and park there, and it is open to the public?" Jacque asked.

Not really.

Francis said the road is a public road for people going to the credit union and delivering materials to the plant. Besides, Jacque was asked to leave.

What of the van? Why wasn't she asked for her identification? Why wasn't the van searched?

"On what grounds?" John Ogle of Browns Ferry asked concerning a search of the van.

Ogle asked why should Jacque have been asked for her identification.

"He asked you a question, asked if you were an employee," he said. "You said no. You were just out for a drive. Why would he then want to ask you for an ID? You appear to be truthful with him."

But, would someone attacking Browns Ferry not appear just as truthful?

"The answer is there are strong security measures in place and you didn't cross that line," Beasley said. "But you have set up in peoples' minds that it is real easy to do that."

As for an effective attack from Jacque's location, Francis said that security measures are in place that have been established by people who "know their stuff."

"They know security, and they are what we believe to be adequate to protect the health and safety of employees and the public," he said.

Their point was made. Each man said he believed Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant to be a safe facility. They said that although Jacque believed she was moving around the perimeter of the facility unnoticed, that she didn't know actually what security measures were in place.

Jacque's point? On Jan. 1 it appeared to her that it was easy to move around in close proximity of a nuclear power plant.

"I hope now, that when you guys leave this room, that you will take a serious look at your security," she said. "That's the intent of this article."

As for the perception created by the article, I tried to explain that outside their security think tanks the perception is what people see. If any other person had been in the same position as Jacque, their perception would have been the same.

If perception is the issue, would it not look better to at least give the appearance of security on that road? If that road is general access, but the area it leads to is restricted to employees, etc., would it not be reasonable, especially with our country on orange alert, to check a van driving around the facility for approximately an hour?

I get the point the gentlemen were trying to make. Security at Browns Ferry is a very serious matter.

I disagree, however, that this newspaper or Jacque Steubbel bear the

responsibility of copy cats, who would try their own "mock attacks."
I understand that there are security measures in place that the public doesn't know about. I believe them when they say that they believe Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant is safe from attack.
I get their point.
I just wonder if they get ours.

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