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Application and Amendment to Facility Operating License Involving Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination

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Application and Amendment to Facility Operating License Involving Proposed No Significant Hazards Consideration Determination; San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 2

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General Comment

I am the author of Nuclear Roulette (Chelsea Green, October 2012). The book, which has recently been nominated for two national book awards, devotes a chapter to the country's "Five Worst Reactors" and the facility at San Onofre was one of the five. A few excerpts from the book:

"Further investigation of Units 2 and 3 revealed damage on an unexpected scale—especially given that \$680 million had been spent on the new generators and they had only been in operation for 22 months. In Unit 2, investigators discovered that more than 871 tubes had lost 10 percent of their thickness, 69 tubes had lost 20 percent of their thickness, and 2 tubes had lost more than one-third of their thickness."

Clearly, the failure of a single tube is cause for concern, but the possible cascading failure of 69 tubes—let alone 871—could easily lead to blocked cooling pipes, burst steam generators, and a catastrophe that could have required the emergency evacuation of densely populated stretches of Southern California.

"I've never heard of anything like that over so short a period of time," Joram Hopfenfeld, a retired NRC engineer, told the media....

On February 2, 2012, SCE spokesperson Gil Alexander offered an unusual defense of the alarming incident, telling the press that "other plants" with new generators had also reported unusual wear....

"Our working hypothesis here is that what we're seeing at San Onofre is the same sort of phenomenon that

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we're investigating at other plants," NRC spokesperson Scott Burnell stated."

Finally:

"On January 27, an outside worker hired by that contractor dropped a flashlight. When the worker leaned over a railing to retrieve his equipment, he plunged headlong into the 20-foot-deep reactor pool, still aglow with the blue brilliance of the Cerenkov radiation being thrown off by the submerged reactor core.

SCE did not file an NRC report on the incident, claiming that the worker received only 5 rem of radioactive exposure."

What is his name and health status?