

# OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Agency: Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Incident Investigation Team

Title: Nine Mile Point Nuclear Power Plant  
Interview of: ERIC HOFFMAN

Docket No.

LOCATION: Scriba, New York

DATE: Tuesday, August 20, 1991

PAGES: 1 - 20

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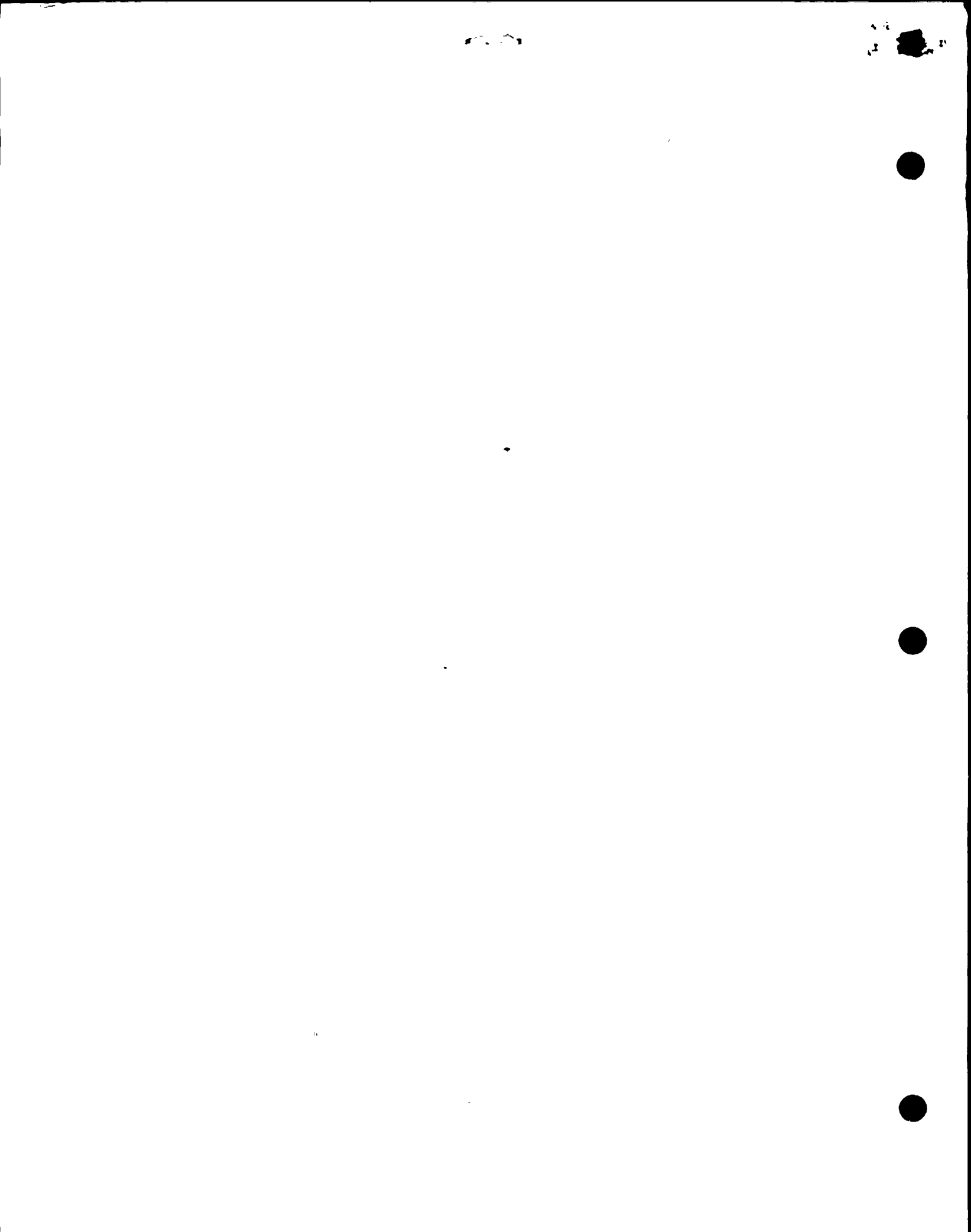


Exhibit 3-1 (continued)

ADDENDUM TO INTERVIEW OF Eric Hoffman NROC.  
(Name/Position)

Page	Line	Correction and Reason for Correction
4	8:	still 900 pounds till now right word.
4	10	wants to started up out of context
4	25	<del>was</del> tripped off line out of context.
5	11	ACIC tripped we shut ACIC down to min flow / not complete sentence of
8	11	Licensed initial or licensed. / what ESAD.
10	2	to be reutilized skip a word.
10	20	Basically from then to a little after ten + 1030. sentence not complete.
10	25	We had instead of we have improper context
11	1	one instead of the
12	25	down to the 261 missing word.
13	14	when we actually make the phone call missing word.
13	17	we reported back / out of context.
15	21	He just happened to be the gauge next to mine. out of context
17	3	In core into plant systems at this time, word missing.
17	12	control rooms indication word missing
18	25	First time word missing.

Page 1 of 1 Signature Eric Hoffman Date 8/22/91



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
INCIDENT INVESTIGATION TEAM

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Interview of :  
ERIC HOFFMAN :  
(Closed) :  
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Conference Room B  
Administration Building  
Nine Mile Point Nuclear  
Power Plant, Unit Two  
Lake Road  
Scriba, New York 13093  
Tuesday, August 20, 1991

The interview commenced, pursuant to notice,  
at 11:02 a.m.

PRESENT FOR THE IIT:  
Michael Jordan, NRC  
Rich Conte, INPO

12



## P R O C E E D I N G S

[11:02 a.m.]

1  
2  
3 MR. JORDAN: Good morning. We're at the Nine Mile  
4 Point Unit Two, in the P building. It's August 20, 1991.  
5 We're here to cover an event of a transient that occurred on  
6 August 13, 1991. I am Michael Jordan. I'm with the NRC out  
7 of Region III.

8 MR. CONTE: I'm Rich Conte. I'm a section chief  
9 from Region I.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm Eric Hoffman, an auxiliary  
11 operator C, Nine Mile Point Two.

12 MR. JORDAN: Eric, before we get started, why  
13 don't you just go ahead and give us a background of your  
14 experience?

15 MR. HOFFMAN: I started in Nine Mile Two  
16 operations back in 1984, during constructions days, and I  
17 progressed through first fuel on site, startup and testing,  
18 into commercial run. Prior to 1984, I was in college for a  
19 couple years.

20 MR. JORDAN: Are you licensed, or are you not  
21 licensed?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: I am not licensed. I'm non-  
23 licensed.

24 MR. JORDAN: Non-licensed operator.

25 Okay, Eric. Why don't you in your own words just





1 give an idea of what you saw transpire when you came on  
2 shift during the event?

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Okay. I was riding down the  
4 elevator when on the elevator we lost all lights. First we  
5 thought the elevator just go stuck, but it continued to come  
6 down. When the door opened on the 261 elevation, lights  
7 were off in that area. We then proceeded to go to the  
8 nearest here-here system --

9 MR. JORDAN: What's the system?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Here-here, PA system.

11 MR. JORDAN: Oh.

12 MR. HOFFMAN: -- to contact the control room to  
13 find out what was going on. We went to the PA system. It  
14 did not work, so we then proceeded to a site phone and  
15 contacted the control room. They told us that they wanted  
16 up upstairs immediately because they have lost indication.  
17 We then proceeded to go upstairs back into the control room,  
18 where I was then instructed to man reactor pressure level  
19 and reactor level gauges on the emergency core cooling  
20 system panels.

21 MR. CONTE: Reactor pressure level and what?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: Reactor pressure and reactor water  
23 level.

24 MR. CONTE: Okay. Just those two parameters.

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes.

10



1 MR. CONTE: Okay.

2 MR. HOFFMAN: I think the first set of readings I  
3 called off was a reactor water level of 175 inches, and  
4 reactor pressure was 964 inches -- or 964 pounds; excuse me.  
5 I then proceeded to keep on calling off numbers when I  
6 noticed any decline or increase in either one, and continued  
7 calling them off until we reached 159 inches water level.  
8 The pressure was till 900, I think; I'm not exactly sure of  
9 the exact number on it. The station shift supervisor  
10 started up RCIC, had a licensed operator come over and start  
11 reactor core isolation cooling, to inject water into the  
12 vessel.

13 We started RCIC in auto first, and then the  
14 licensed operator switched over to manual, because it seemed  
15 there was erratic control when it was in auto. He was  
16 injecting; I was watching level. Level still was  
17 decreasing; pressure still was decreasing. He continued  
18 injection. Then I noticed a turn-around, where level  
19 started to rise. I called off the reading to the SSS, which  
20 he wrote down, and continued to watch level.

21 Level continued on climbing, to the point where  
22 the licensed operator backed off on the flow of RCIC because  
23 level was coming up. Level continued on rising, to the  
24 point that the licensed operator -- we hit level 8, and RCIC  
25 was already off line, basically; it was past min flow. We

11-11-11



1 went off-scale on the wide band recorder that I was reading.

2           Mainly I just kept on calling off pressures and  
3 levels as the licensed operators were manipulating various  
4 other systems to try to regain everything.

5           MR. JORDAN: When the level was coming up, do you  
6 have any idea of a time frame when the annunciators came  
7 back on and the power came back?

8           MR. HOFFMAN: I can't really remember, but I don't  
9 think it was --

10          MR. JORDAN: Before or after RCIC tripped?

11          MR. HOFFMAN: RCIC didn't trip; we shut RCIC down.  
12 It probably was like five, six minutes. I'm not positive.  
13 To me that sounds about right, because I was still watching  
14 level when it came back on.

15          MR. JORDAN: Five to six minutes after, before?

16          MR. HOFFMAN: Probably from the time that we  
17 started RCIC to the time that the lights came back on.

18          MR. JORDAN: Okay.

19          MR. CONTE: Okay. Can you continue.

20          MR. HOFFMAN: Basically, I was assigned to that  
21 position and watching that when they tried to re-establish  
22 flow and everything with the condensate booster pumps. Then  
23 I was relieved of position as other licensed operators came  
24 on who were coming in for the morning shift.

25                 Then I was instructed to go down to the air

202



1 removal system and make sure that was ready to go into  
2 service.

3 MR. CONTE: To make sure what was ready?

4 MR. HOFFMAN: Air removal system.

5 MR. CONTE: Okay.

6 MR. HOFFMAN: I was sent down to make sure that it  
7 had proper seal water level, oil level, that they were both  
8 able to be used to maintain condenser vacuum.

9 MR. JORDAN: That's what the air removal system is  
10 for?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: To maintain condenser vacuum.

12 MR. CONTE: These are the hoppers?

13 MR. HOFFMAN: These are the hoppers, yes.

14 MR. CONTE: Okay.

15 About what time did you leave the control room?  
16 The condensate booster feed pump attempt to start up  
17 occurred around 7, 7:30. Were you in the control room at  
18 that time?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I was.

20 MR. CONTE: So it was after -- Based on that time  
21 of reference, about how long after that?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: I can't remember the exact time, how  
23 long. I was in there for a while longer after that. I was  
24 still reading level when they were controlling with the  
25 condensate booster. I was reading the wide range, which was





1 coming down back on the scale again, and they had a licensed  
2 operator reading narrow range over in another panel.

3 MR. CONTE: Okay. You were down at the hoppers.  
4 What happened next?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: I called the control room up to let  
6 them know the situation with the hoppers -- they were ready  
7 to be started -- and I was told not to go up to 277 because  
8 there was a high rad annunciator in on the off-gas system.

9 MR. CONTE: Go up to 277 elevation.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Turbine building.

11 MR. CONTE: Because of a high rad?

12 MR. HOFFMAN: High rad alarm was annunciated from  
13 off-gas system.

14 That's when I turned around and noticed the  
15 radiation monitors in the area. There was one 30, 40 feet  
16 away from me annunciating also, alarming. I then proceeded  
17 --

18 MR. CONTE: What elevation?

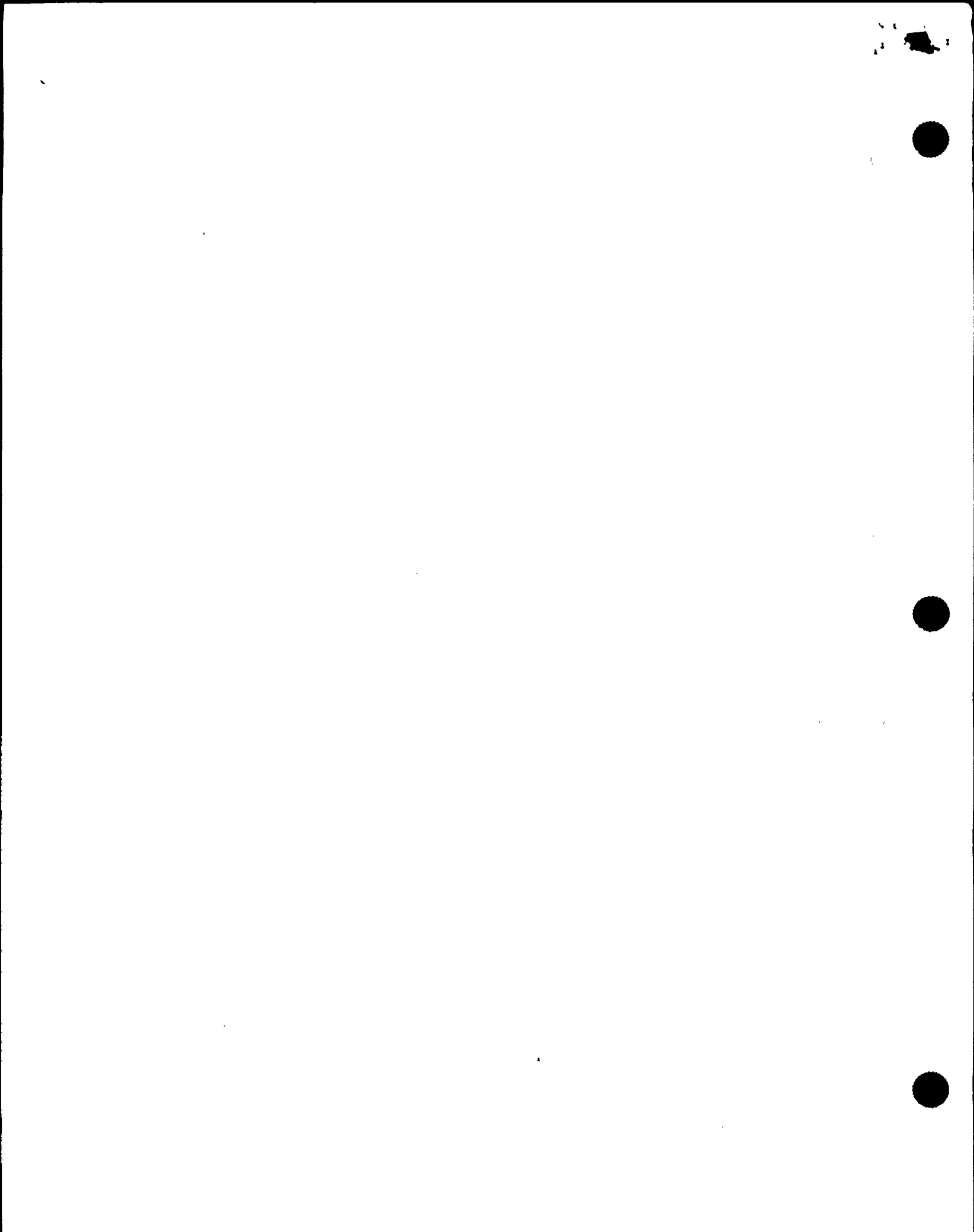
19 MR. HOFFMAN: I was on 250.

20 MR. CONTE: And 250 is where the hoppers are.

21 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. CONTE: And there was a radiation monitor  
23 around that?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: Around the paging system I was  
25 using, yes.



1 MR. CONTE: Is there a meter there, so you could  
2 tell what the --

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, there was.

4 MR. CONTE: Was that high?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: No, it wasn't. It was reading 10 to  
6 the minus 1st.

7 MR. CONTE: Was there an alarm?

8 MR. HOFFMAN: The alarm light was going off, yes.

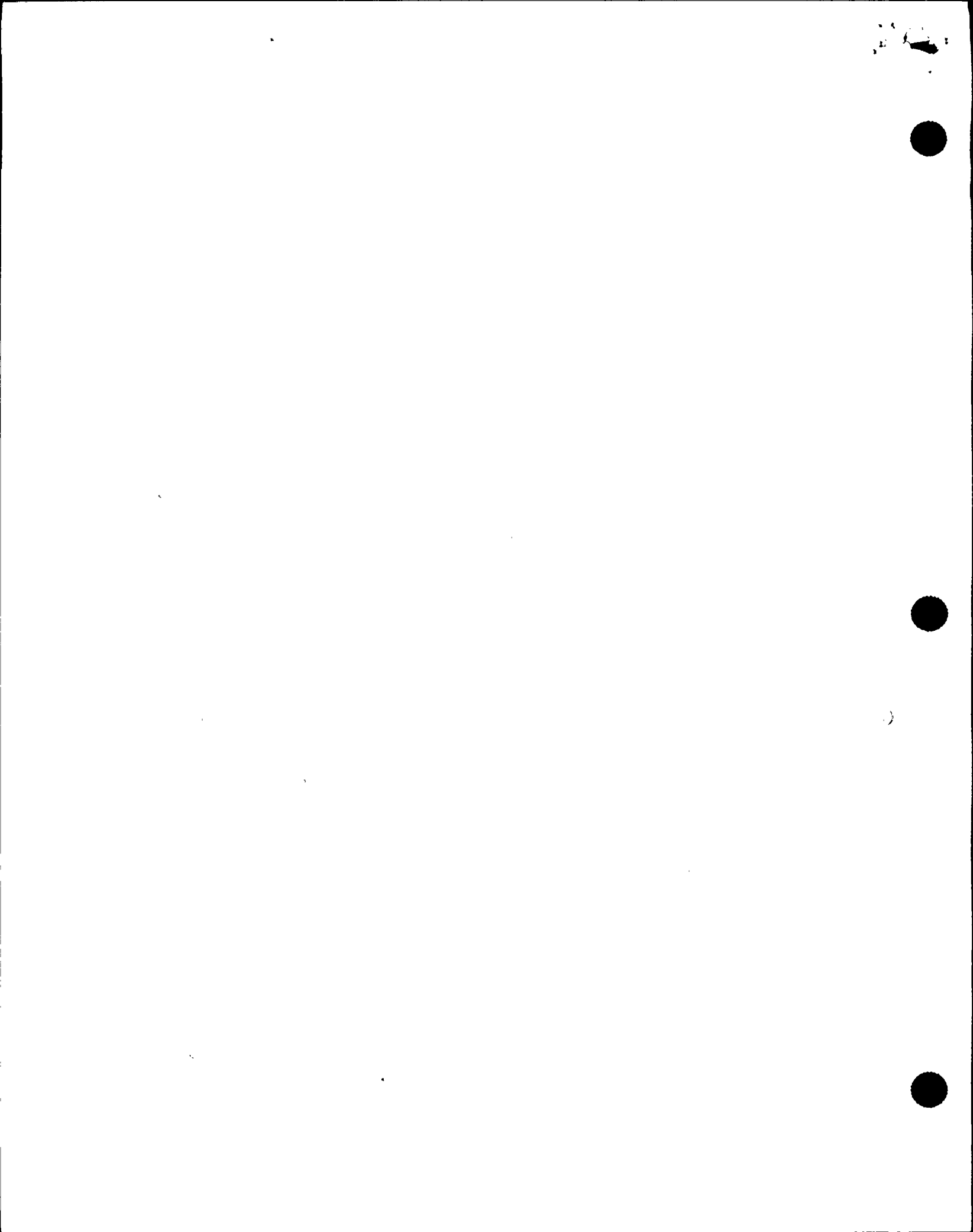
9 MR. CONTE: And in your mind is that unusual?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it is. I proceeded to tell the  
11 licensed operator I was talking to in the control room the  
12 alarm was going off and I was leaving the area. When I  
13 walked past area I read the annunciator part of the meter  
14 for that radiation monitor to see what it was reading and  
15 proceeded to leave that area and ran past another radiation  
16 monitor that was alarming and read that annunciator's level.

17 Both of them were reading ten to the minus first.

18 I then proceeded up to the control room and  
19 explained what I saw down on 250 area to the licensed  
20 operator. He explained to the Chief Shift Operator what I  
21 saw where they made the determination to evacuate the  
22 turbine building until Rad Protection was able to go out and  
23 survey because even though they were reading low levels they  
24 wanted to make sure because the alarms were going.

25 MR. CONTE: Did anyone offer an explanation as to



1 why the alarms were in versus the indication?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Talking to a Radiation  
3 Protection tech, me and him, just between the two of us,  
4 thoguht maybe due to the fact that when the UPS's did come  
5 back into service that they might have spiked the radiation  
6 monitors, causing an alarm to come in and then, you know, as  
7 soon as power was re-established it was reading normal  
8 again, but when the power initially came on the surge of  
9 voltage might have spiked the monitors.

10 MR. CONTE: Is there a way we remove that alarm,  
11 like hitting a reset button of some sort?

12 MR. HOFFMAN: There is an acknowledge and reset  
13 button but we were instructed per administration procedures  
14 when we see alarm to get the reading and get out and report  
15 it.

16 MR. CONTE: Okay, continue. You got back to the  
17 control room, made your report.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Then we were in the middle of the  
19 site area emergency where, you know, we were instructed to  
20 make sure you were logged in, into the control room area  
21 and then waited for the next job, which basically from that  
22 time, which is pretty close to by the time everything was  
23 overwith and they figured out -- I think it was about 9:30 -  
24 - and basically since our shift was all night and there were  
25 three other shifts, they basically just told us to sit down

21



1 and wait until the emergency was over unless we were needed  
2 to re-utilize --

3 MR. CONTE: Wait where?

4 MR. HOFFMAN: We were waiting in the control room  
5 and then we were instructed to wait over at the beehive,  
6 which is right across -- it's our staging area because there  
7 is too many people and they wanted to maintain decorum in  
8 the control room.

9 MR. CONTE: What time did you get relieved and  
10 allowed to go home?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: Eleven o'clock.

12 MR. CONTE: So you spent 9:30 to 11:00 in the  
13 beehive?

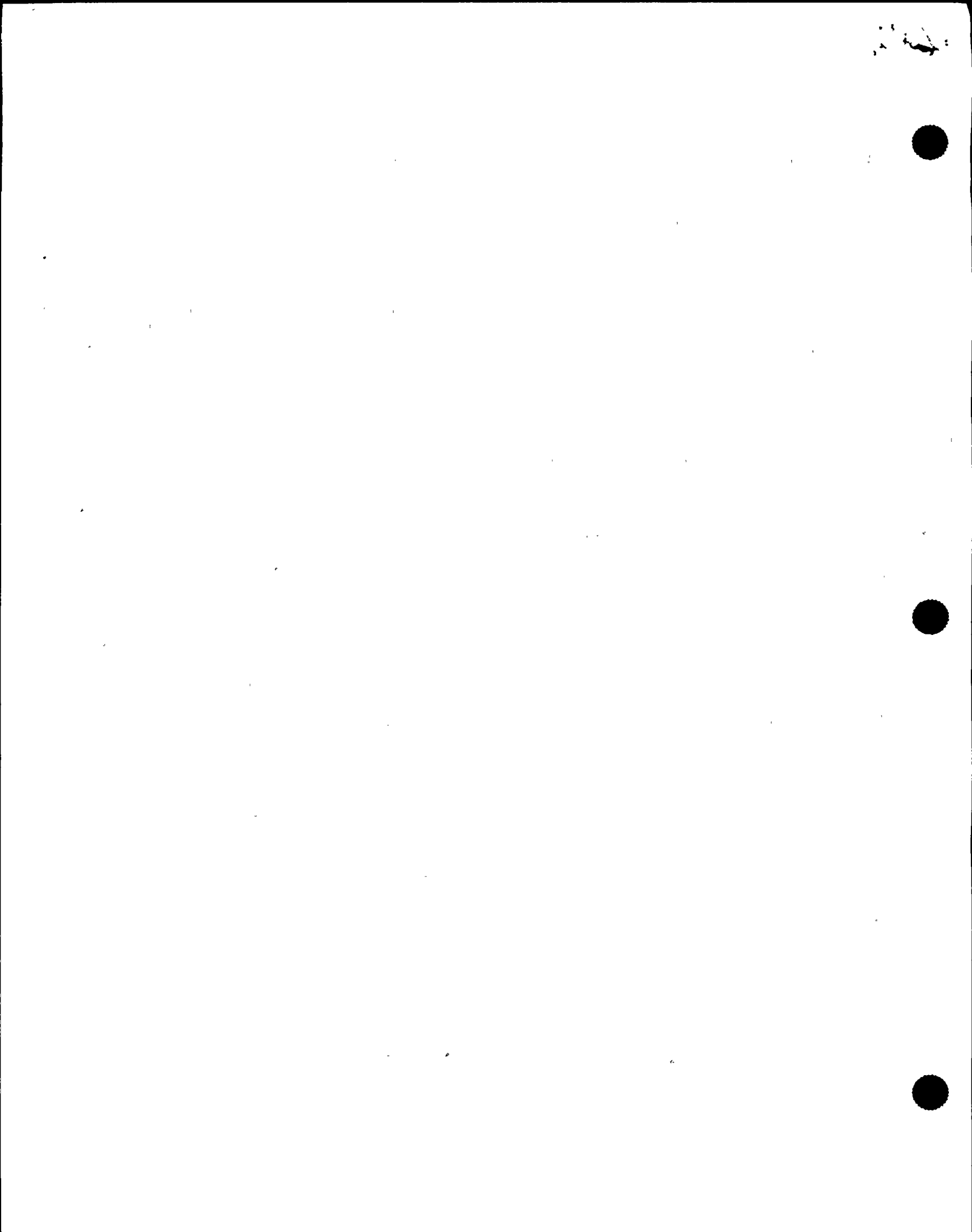
14 MR. HOFFMAN: Closer probably like 10:00. I went  
15 out and did a few minor jobs which were normal plant  
16 function jobs, if you want to call it that --

17 MR. CONTE: Like what?

18 MR. HOFFMAN: I charged the air compressors on one  
19 of the diesels because we have to use a cross-tie on it and  
20 gasically from then about a little after 10:00 to 10:30,  
21 when they got permission from the EOF to let us leave, I was  
22 instructed to wait in the staging area until I was needed.

23 MR. CONTE: Tell me something about this crosstie  
24 and the need to charge the emergency diesels?

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Diesel generators. We have





1 the diesel air compressor was being marked up to be fixed  
2 and we have two compressors for the two tanks. One  
3 compressor is marked up so you have to open when the low  
4 pressure alarm comes in, you have to manually charge it up.

5 They were trying to repair one of the dryers.

6 MR. CONTE: What's the crosstie aspect? I  
7 thought--

8 MR. HOFFMAN: It was two tanks and what it does is  
9 you open a crosstie. Since one compressor's marked up it  
10 allowed the compressor of the diesel or air compressor of  
11 the two tanks to each have a compressor, allows the  
12 compressor, the different tank, to charge to one whose  
13 compressor is being marked up.

14 MR. CONTE: Does each tank have these two -- does  
15 each diesel have these two tanks or does one tank go with  
16 one diesel and the other tank go with the other diesel?

17 MR. HOFFMAN: No. Each diesel has two tanks.

18 MR. CONTE: Oh, I see, so really a crosstie is  
19 within one emergency diesel generator room?

20 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

21 MR. CONTE: Okay.

22 MR. HOFFMAN: It's sits between the two tanks and  
23 the diesel to enable us to allow to charge the tank up to  
24 acceptable pressure.

25 MR. JORDAN: Do you isolate one tank and then

Handwritten marks or scribbles in the top right corner.



1 charge the other when you crosstie or are they both tied  
2 together?

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Both tied together.

4 MR. CONTE: Until they get charged.

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Until they get charged up and then  
6 we re-isolate the crosstie and both tanks are now separate  
7 again.

8 MR. CONTE: Okay, so that takes us to when you  
9 left, around 11:00.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

11 MR. CONTE: Okay. I have some review questions  
12 here based on that chronology of what you gave us.

13 Can you be specific in terms of the building?

14 You mentioned an elevation but what portion of the  
15 building -- you were in the elevator?

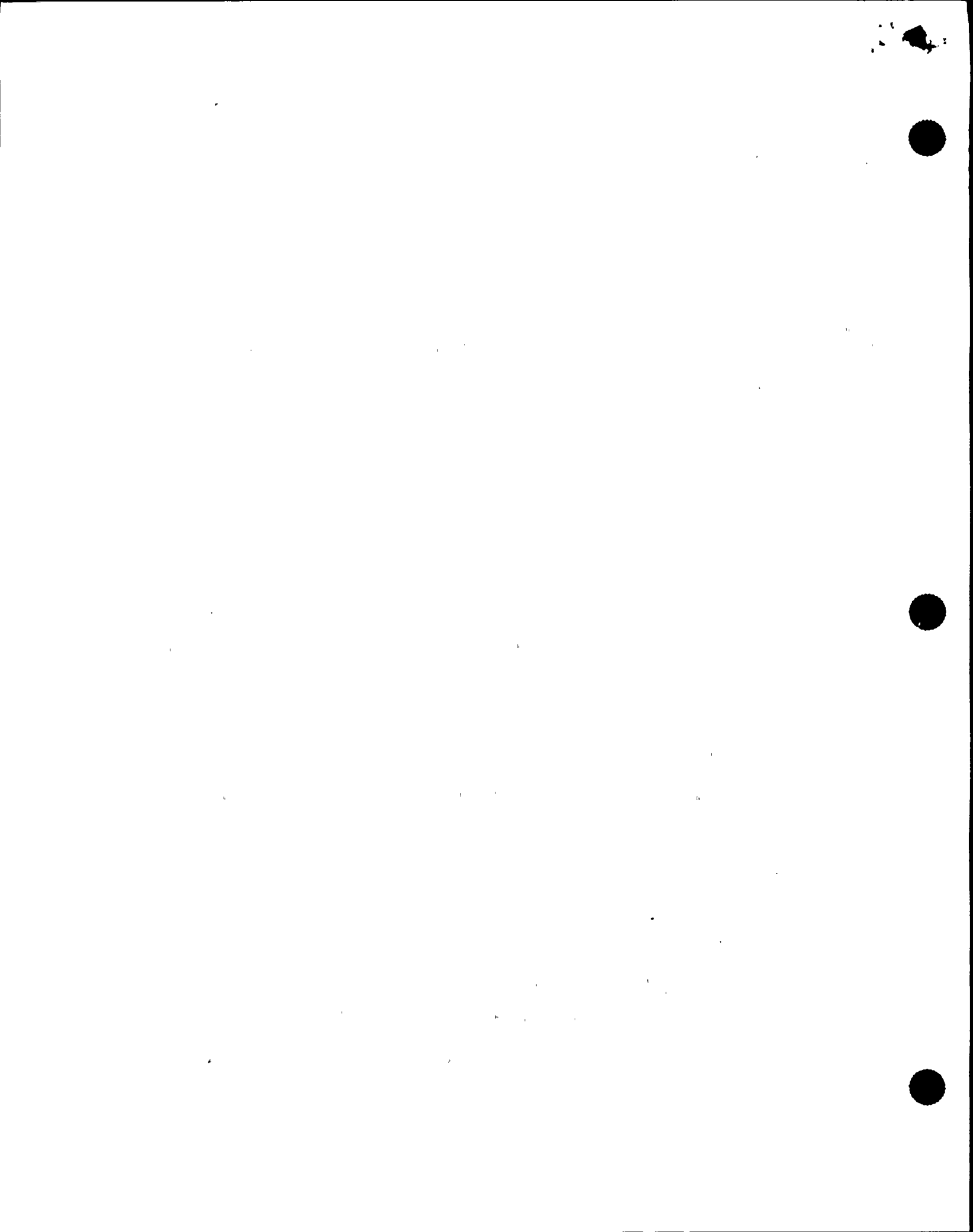
16 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. That was for the auxiliary  
17 service building.

18 MR. CONTE: Auxiliary service building. Does this  
19 elevator take you up and down past the Rad Protectio office  
20 or something?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: The Rad Protection office is located  
22 at the top of the elevator route, the 306.

23 MR. CONTE: You weren't in that area at all, 306?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: Well, that's where I was coming down  
25 from. I was coming down from the control room down the 261



1 elevation.

2 MR. CONTE: Okay, and you explained the symptom of  
3 the elevator being black, black with the exception of -- was  
4 there any lights in the elevator?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, there was. The floor  
6 indication light indicated between 2 and 3. The elevator  
7 seemed to stop momentarily and then continued down to 2,  
8 which is elevation 261.

9 MR. CONTE: When you come in on 261 of the aux  
10 service building, you found darkness?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I did.

12 MR. CONTE: No emergency lighting?

13 MR. HOFFMAN: Did not seem to be. I did not  
14 notice any on -- actually made the phone call, reported back  
15 up to the control room. The stairways were dark also.

16 MR. JORDAN: Did you have a flashlight?

17 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I did.

18 MR. JORDAN: Glad you had a flashlight?

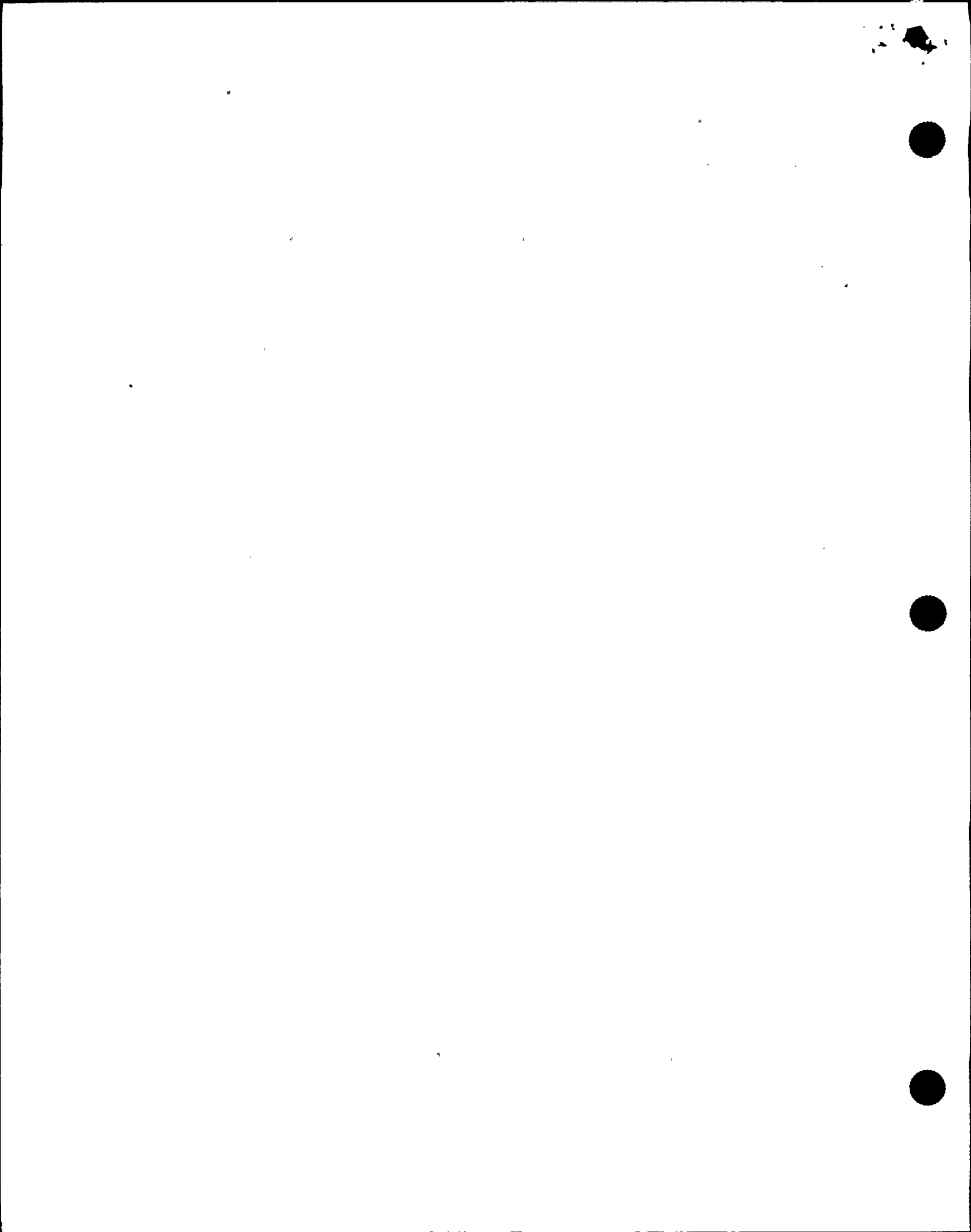
19 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I am. It got real dark.

20 MR. CONTE: The stairways in the aux service  
21 building were?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

23 MR. CONTE: How many stairways are in this aux  
24 service building, just that one?

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. It gets from the 261 entrance



1 into the plant up to the control building. There's three  
2 flights of stairs.

3 MR. CONTE: And the nearest here--here was where?  
4 In that same building?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it was. It was probably from  
6 the elevator it was 35 feet away.

7 MR. CONTE: Was that black in that area too?

8 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it was.

9 MR. CONTE: No emergency lighting?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Did not notice any.

11 The lighting was on and where we found the plant  
12 phone, which is in the locker room, the lighting was on in  
13 there though.

14 MR. CONTE: That's interesting.

15 [Laughter.]

16 MR. CONTE: Lighting in the stairways and  
17 elevators dark -- do the elevators have emergency lighting  
18 in them?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: I really couldn't tell you, off  
20 hand. I would have to look again.

21 MR. CONTE: Okay. Good. On monitoring reactor  
22 pressure and level can you tell me the highest and the  
23 lowest of the two parameters that you ever observed?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: What I can remember is we started  
25 out at a reactor pressure of 964 pounds, reactor water, the

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1 highest you want for reactor water was off scale on my meter  
2 which is greater than 200 inches. The lowest I saw -- that  
3 I can remember reactor water getting was, I would have to  
4 say, not positively, but I would say in the 150 range -- 149  
5 range. The lowest -- reactor pressure continued on,  
6 dropping down -- I can't remember exactly what the pressure  
7 got to, it got down to 590, I do remember, but I think it  
8 continued on lowering after that.

9 I do know that it seemed to stop twice when it was  
10 decreasing. It seemed to settle out for a minute or two --

11 MR. CONTE: Level?

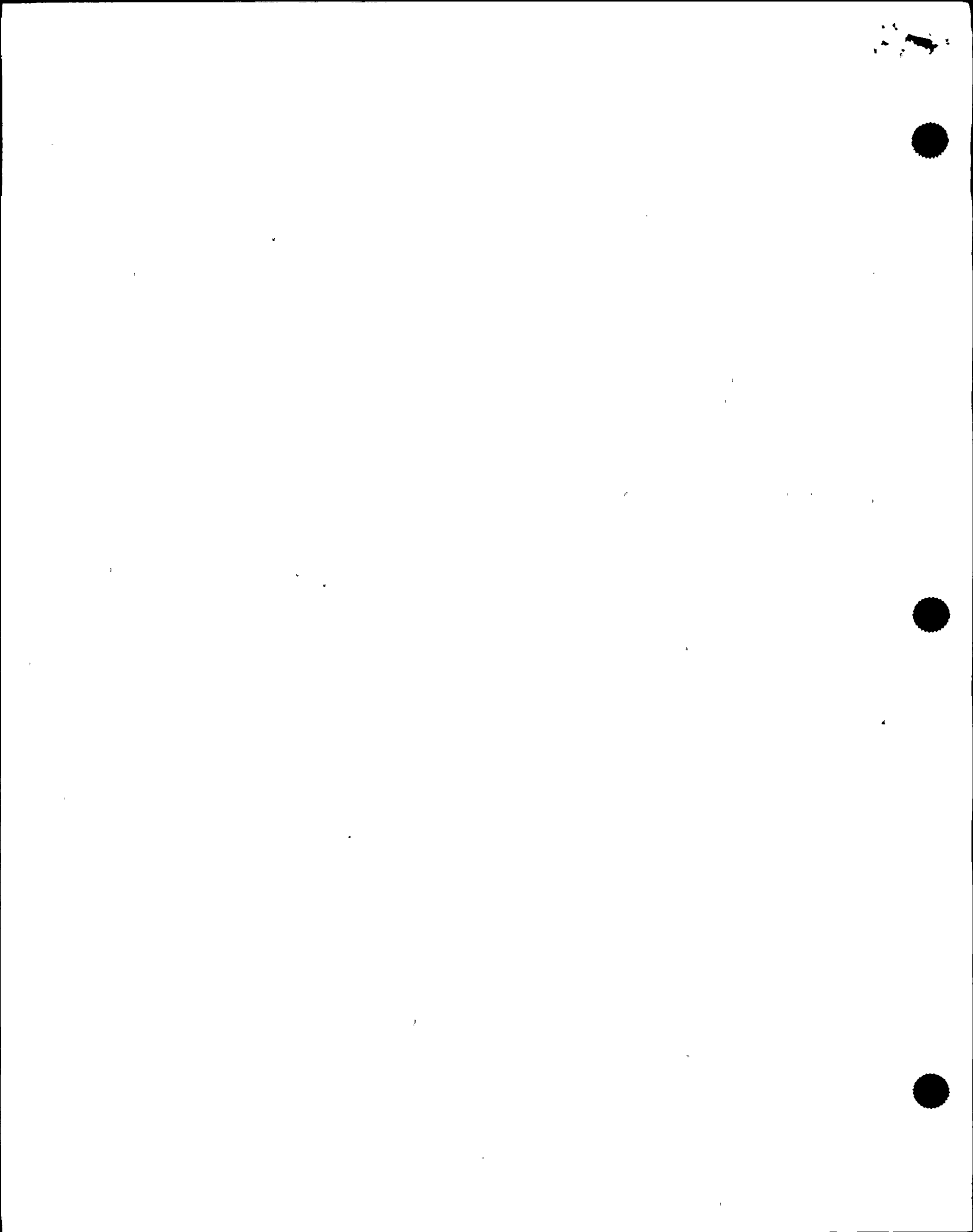
12 MR. HOFFMAN: Level. Yeah. It seemed to settle  
13 and then it continued on dropping again.

14 MR. CONTE: Okay. Do you happen to know what the  
15 RCIC initiation is -- initiation setting is?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm not really sure. I think it is  
17 -- well, single low level is, I think 158.8. I am not  
18 positive. And the SSS called to start at 159. I'm pretty  
19 sure that was the number he called and started it at.

20 As I said before, a licensed operator was, doing  
21 many of those functions, just happened to be he gauge next  
22 to mine.

23 MR. CONTE: You must have overheard the -- I guess  
24 the operator who was controlling RCIC indicated going from  
25 automatic to manual, did he give a reason? Did you hear a



1 reason?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: The best that I can remember, as I  
3 said, I was more intently watching what I was told to do --  
4 was to do -- the flow was erratic and the flow meters seemed  
5 to erratic in auto. So, he announced he was switching over  
6 to manual.

7 MR. CONTE: The flow was erratic. Okay. Did you  
8 offer an explanation as to why the reactor level went high?  
9 Did you hear or did you know anything?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Not that I remember. I don't really  
11 remember why. The only thing I could think of, is as we  
12 started injecting flow, it came up and then even though we  
13 backed off, it was still coming on.

14 MR. CONTE: You didn't hear any emotional  
15 statement from anyone like "Oh no" or --

16 MR. HOFFMAN: No.

17 MR. CONTE: Okay.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Everything was very professional in  
19 there.

20 MR. CONTE: And when he got that Level 8, he shut  
21 down RCIC?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: He was shut down before he hit Level  
23 8 if I remember correctly.

24 MR. CONTE: And that was -- is that normal -- did  
25 you happen to know if that is normal practice to shut down

23



1 RCIC before the Level 8 function comes in?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm not trained in the control room  
3 aspects of the systems. I'm more into plant at this time.

4 MR. CONTE: That's a fair answer. All right.

5 Mike, jump in, if you've got anything.

6 MR. JORDAN: I've got just a couple questions.

7 Did -- you say it went off scale, high on level, did it stay  
8 there, did it come back down?

9 MR. HOFFMAN: It stayed there for a while and then  
10 came back down. It went -- on the wide range it went off  
11 scale and, as I said before, I'm not real familiar with the  
12 control rooms --

13 MR. JORDAN: Did it come back down to the point  
14 where they had to restart RCIC? Did it come back down and  
15 they were controlling it elsewhere outside of RCIC?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: It came back down, but they never  
17 restarted RCIC. They came back down within acceptable  
18 range.

19 MR. JORDAN: Do you know what range it was in?

20 MR. HOFFMAN: No, I can't remember, off hand. As  
21 I said, they started to control with condensate boosters.

22 MR. JORDAN: So as far as you know RCIC was only  
23 used one time?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

25 MR. JORDAN: Okay. You mentioned that you were at



1 the 250 foot area in the Hoggers, what building is that in?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: That is in the turbine building.

3 MR. JORDAN: Turbine building. And you had the  
4 RAD monitor that was close to the area alarming?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

6 MR. JORDAN: And you read it at ten to the --

7 MR. HOFFMAN: Ten to the minus first.

8 MR. JORDAN: And then you said there was another  
9 alarm?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Um hm.

11 MR. JORDAN: That you -- actually near that you  
12 came across? Do you have any idea where that was at? Same  
13 Elevation?

14 MR. HOFFMAN: Same elevation, the east end of the  
15 building versus the first alarm was on the west end of the  
16 building.

17 MR. JORDAN: And that one was alarming and it was  
18 reading?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Ten to the minus one, again.

20 MR. JORDAN: Same thing?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. JORDAN: Okay. And at that time you notified  
23 the control room, is that correct?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: I notified the control room the  
25 first -- after they told me about the high radiation level





1 the 277 annunciator being in, I then looked around to make  
2 sure that the ones on my level -- because I'm right below  
3 that, weren't in and they turned out to be. I then told the  
4 control room I was leaving the area.

5 MR. JORDAN: Is the alarm an audible? Is it a  
6 visual -- what?

7 MR. HOFFMAN: It's a visual. The alarm that was  
8 going was visual. There is also audible, but the visual is  
9 what I noticed it was pretty loud down there. I didn't even  
10 get right next to it. I got close enough to be able to see  
11 what the level was and then proceeded out of the building.

12 MR. JORDAN: That's how you -- in other words you  
13 didn't hear the audible alarm, you noticed the visual  
14 alarm?

15 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

16 MR. JORDAN: Or a light, what's the --

17 MR. HOFFMAN: It's a flashing light. It's like a  
18 siren light or police light.

19 MR. JORDAN: Okay. So it's a red light that  
20 flashes, is that correct?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

22 MR. JORDAN: Okay. The communications at that  
23 time were working? What were you using?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: I was using the here-here system.  
25 By that time the UPS's -- our power had been restored to the



1 annunciators and here-here systems.

2 MR. JORDAN: So after that time you knew of no  
3 other problems as far communications with the control room?  
4 You were out in the plant doing other activities for the  
5 day?

6 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

7 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

8 MR. CONTE: I'm done.

9 MR. JORDAN: So am I.

10 MR. CONTE: Let's go off the record.

11 [Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the taking of the  
12 interview was concluded.]

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceedings before the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission

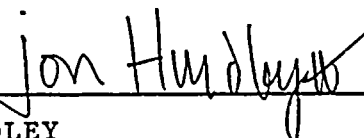
in the matter of:

NAME OF PROCEEDING: Int. of ERIC HOFFMAN

DOCKET NUMBER:

PLACE OF PROCEEDING: Scriba, N.Y.

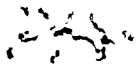
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JON HUNDLEY

Official Reporter  
Ann Riley & Associates, Ltd.



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07-89A-91

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Agency: Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Incident Investigation Team

Title: Nine Mile Point Nuclear Power Plant  
Interview of: ERIC HOFFMAN

Docket No.

LOCATION: Scriba, New York

DATE: Tuesday, August 20, 1991

PAGES: 1 - 20

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
INCIDENT INVESTIGATION TEAM

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Interview of :  
ERIC HOFFMAN :  
(Closed) :  
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Conference Room B  
Administration Building  
Nine Mile Point Nuclear  
Power Plant, Unit Two  
Lake Road  
Scriba, New York 13093  
Tuesday, August 20, 1991

The interview commenced, pursuant to notice,  
at 11:02 a.m.

PRESENT FOR THE IIT:  
Michael Jordan, NRC  
Rich Conte, INPO



## P R O C E E D I N G S

[11:02 a.m.]

1  
2  
3 MR. JORDAN: Good morning. We're at the Nine Mile  
4 Point Unit Two, in the P building. It's August 20, 1991.  
5 We're here to cover an event of a transient that occurred on  
6 August 13, 1991. I am Michael Jordan. I'm with the NRC out  
7 of Region III.

8 MR. CONTE: I'm Rich Conte. I'm a section chief  
9 from Region I.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm Eric Hoffman, an auxiliary  
11 operator C, Nine Mile Point Two.

12 MR. JORDAN: Eric, before we get started, why  
13 don't you just go ahead and give us a background of your  
14 experience?

15 MR. HOFFMAN: I started in Nine Mile Two  
16 operations back in 1984, during constructions days, and I  
17 progressed through first fuel on site, startup and testing,  
18 into commercial run. Prior to 1984, I was in college for a  
19 couple years.

20 MR. JORDAN: Are you licensed, or are you not  
21 licensed?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: I am not licensed. I'm non-  
23 licensed.

24 MR. JORDAN: Non-licensed operator.

25 Okay, Eric. Why don't you in your own words just



1 give an idea of what you saw transpire when you came on  
2 shift during the event?

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Okay. I was riding down the  
4 elevator when on the elevator we lost all lights. First we  
5 thought the elevator just go stuck, but it continued to come  
6 down. When the door opened on the 261 elevation, lights  
7 were off in that area. We then proceeded to go to the  
8 nearest here-here system --

9 MR. JORDAN: What's the system?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Here-here, PA system.

11 MR. JORDAN: Oh.

12 MR. HOFFMAN: -- to contact the control room to  
13 find out what was going on. We went to the PA system. It  
14 did not work, so we then proceeded to a site phone and  
15 contacted the control room. They told us that they wanted  
16 up upstairs immediately because they have lost indication.  
17 We then proceeded to go upstairs back into the control room,  
18 where I was then instructed to man reactor pressure level  
19 and reactor level gauges on the emergency core cooling  
20 system panels.

21 MR. CONTE: Reactor pressure level and what?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: Reactor pressure and reactor water  
23 level.

24 MR. CONTE: Okay. Just those two parameters.

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes.





1 MR. CONTE: Okay.

2 MR. HOFFMAN: I think the first set of readings I  
3 called off was a reactor water level of 175 inches, and  
4 reactor pressure was 964 inches -- or 964 pounds; excuse me.  
5 I then proceeded to keep on calling off numbers when I  
6 noticed any decline or increase in either one, and continued  
7 calling them off until we reached 159 inches water level.  
8 The pressure was till 900, I think; I'm not exactly sure of  
9 the exact number on it. The station shift supervisor  
10 started up RCIC, had a licensed operator come over and start  
11 reactor core isolation cooling, to inject water into the  
12 vessel.

13 We started RCIC in auto first, and then the  
14 licensed operator switched over to manual, because it seemed  
15 there was erratic control when it was in auto. He was  
16 injecting; I was watching level. Level still was  
17 decreasing; pressure still was decreasing. He continued  
18 injection. Then I noticed a turn-around, where level  
19 started to rise. I called off the reading to the SSS, which  
20 he wrote down, and continued to watch level.

21 Level continued on climbing, to the point where  
22 the licensed operator backed off on the flow of RCIC because  
23 level was coming up. Level continued on rising, to the  
24 point that the licensed operator -- we hit level 8, and RCIC  
25 was already off line, basically; it was past min flow. We



1 went off-scale on the wide band recorder that I was reading.

2 Mainly I just kept on calling off pressures and  
3 levels as the licensed operators were manipulating various  
4 other systems to try to regain everything.

5 MR. JORDAN: When the level was coming up, do you  
6 have any idea of a time frame when the annunciators came  
7 back on and the power came back?

8 MR. HOFFMAN: I can't really remember, but I don't  
9 think it was --

10 MR. JORDAN: Before or after RCIC tripped?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: RCIC didn't trip; we shut RCIC down.  
12 It probably was like five, six minutes. I'm not positive.  
13 To me that sounds about right, because I was still watching  
14 level when it came back on.

15 MR. JORDAN: Five to six minutes after, before?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: Probably from the time that we  
17 started RCIC to the time that the lights came back on.

18 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

19 MR. CONTE: Okay. Can you continue.

20 MR. HOFFMAN: Basically, I was assigned to that  
21 position and watching that when they tried to re-establish  
22 flow and everything with the condensate booster pumps. Then  
23 I was relieved of position as other licensed operators came  
24 on who were coming in for the morning shift.

25 Then I was instructed to go down to the air



1 removal system and make sure that was ready to go into  
2 service.

3 MR. CONTE: To make sure what was ready?

4 MR. HOFFMAN: Air removal system.

5 MR. CONTE: Okay.

6 MR. HOFFMAN: I was sent down to make sure that it  
7 had proper seal water level, oil level, that they were both  
8 able to be used to maintain condenser vacuum.

9 MR. JORDAN: That's what the air removal system is  
10 for?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: To maintain condenser vacuum.

12 MR. CONTE: These are the hoppers?

13 MR. HOFFMAN: These are the hoppers, yes.

14 MR. CONTE: Okay.

15 About what time did you leave the control room?  
16 The condensate booster feed pump attempt to start up  
17 occurred around 7, 7:30. Were you in the control room at  
18 that time?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I was.

20 MR. CONTE: So it was after -- Based on that time  
21 of reference, about how long after that?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: I can't remember the exact time, how  
23 long. I was in there for a while longer after that. I was  
24 still reading level when they were controlling with the  
25 condensate booster. I was reading the wide range, which was



1 coming down back on the scale again, and they had a licensed  
2 operator reading narrow range over in another panel.

3 MR. CONTE: Okay. You were down at the hoppers.  
4 What happened next?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: I called the control room up to let  
6 them know the situation with the hoppers -- they were ready  
7 to be started -- and I was told not to go up to 277 because  
8 there was a high rad annunciator in on the off-gas system.

9 MR. CONTE: Go up to 277 elevation.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Turbine building.

11 MR. CONTE: Because of a high rad?

12 MR. HOFFMAN: High rad alarm was annunciated from  
13 off-gas system.

14 That's when I turned around and noticed the  
15 radiation monitors in the area. There was one 30, 40 feet  
16 away from me annunciating also, alarming. I then proceeded  
17 --

18 MR. CONTE: What elevation?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: I was on 250.

20 MR. CONTE: And 250 is where the hoppers are.

21 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. CONTE: And there was a radiation monitor  
23 around that?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: Around the paging system I was  
25 using, yes.





1 MR. CONTE: Is there a meter there, so you could  
2 tell what the --

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, there was.

4 MR. CONTE: Was that high?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: No, it wasn't. It was reading 10 to  
6 the minus 1st.

7 MR. CONTE: Was there an alarm?

8 MR. HOFFMAN: The alarm light was going off, yes.

9 MR. CONTE: And in your mind is that unusual?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it is. I proceeded to tell the  
11 licened operator I was talking to in the control room the  
12 alarm was going off and I was leaving the area. When I  
13 walked past area I read the annunciator part of the meter  
14 for that radiation monitor to see what it was reading and  
15 proceeded to leave that area and ran past another radiation  
16 monitor that was alarming and read that annunciator's level.

17 Both of them were reading ten to the minus first.

18 I then proceeded up to the control room and  
19 explained what I saw down on 250 area to the licensed  
20 operator. He explained to the Chief Shift Operator what I  
21 saw where they made the determination to evacuate the  
22 turbine building until Rad Protection was able to go out and  
23 survey because even though they were reading low levels they  
24 wanted to make sure because the alarms were going.

25 MR. CONTE: Did anyone offer an explanation as to



1 why the alarms were in versus the indication?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Talking to a Radiation  
3 Protection tech, me and him, just between the two of us,  
4 thoguht maybe due to the fact that when the UPS's did come  
5 back into service that they might have spiked the radiation  
6 monitors, causing an alarm to come in and then, you know, as  
7 soon as power was re-established it was reading normal  
8 again, but when the power initially came on the surge of  
9 voltage might have spiked the monitors.

10 MR. CONTE: Is there a way we remove that alarm,  
11 like hitting a reset button of some sort?

12 MR. HOFFMAN: There is an acknowledge and reset  
13 button but we were instructed per administration procedures  
14 when we see alarm to get the reading and get out and report  
15 it.

16 MR. CONTE: Okay, continue. You got back to the  
17 control room, made your report.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Then we were in the middle of the  
19 site area emergency where, you know, we were instructed to  
20 make sure you were logged in, into the control room area  
21 and then waited for the next job, which basically from that  
22 time, which is pretty close to by the time everything was  
23 overwith and they figured out -- I think it was about 9:30 -  
24 - and basically since our shift was all night and there were  
25 three other shifts, they basically just told us to sit down



1 and wait until the emergency was over unless we were needed  
2 to re-utilize --

3 MR. CONTE: Wait where?

4 MR. HOFFMAN: We were waiting in the control room  
5 and then we were instructed to wait over at the beehive,  
6 which is right across -- it's our staging area because there  
7 is too many people and they wanted to maintain decorum in  
8 the control room.

9 MR. CONTE: What time did you get relieved and  
10 allowed to go home?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: Eleven o'clock.

12 MR. CONTE: So you spent 9:30 to 11:00 in the  
13 beehive?

14 MR. HOFFMAN: Closer probably like 10:00. I went  
15 out and did a few minor jobs which were normal plant  
16 function jobs, if you want to call it that --

17 MR. CONTE: Like what?

18 MR. HOFFMAN: I charged the air compressors on one  
19 of the diesels because we have to use a cross-tie on it and  
20 gasically from then about a little after 10:00 to 10:30,  
21 when they got permission from the EOF to let us leave, I was  
22 instructed to wait in the staging area until I was needed.

23 MR. CONTE: Tell me something about this crosstie  
24 and the need to charge the emergency diesels?

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. Diesel generators. We have



1 the diesel air compressor was being marked up to be fixed  
2 and we have two compressors for the two tanks. One  
3 compressor is marked up so you have to open when the low  
4 pressure alarm comes in, you have to manually charge it up.

5 They were trying to repair one of the dryers.

6 MR. CONTE: What's the crosstie aspect? I  
7 thought--

8 MR. HOFFMAN: It was two tanks and what it does is  
9 you open a crosstie. Since one compressor's marked up it  
10 allowed the compressor of the diesel or air compressor of  
11 the two tanks to each have a compressor, allows the  
12 compressor, the different tank, to charge to one whose  
13 compressor is being marked up.

14 MR. CONTE: Does each tank have these two -- does  
15 each diesel have these two tanks or does one tank go with  
16 one diesel and the other tank go with the other diesel?

17 MR. HOFFMAN: No. Each diesel has two tanks.

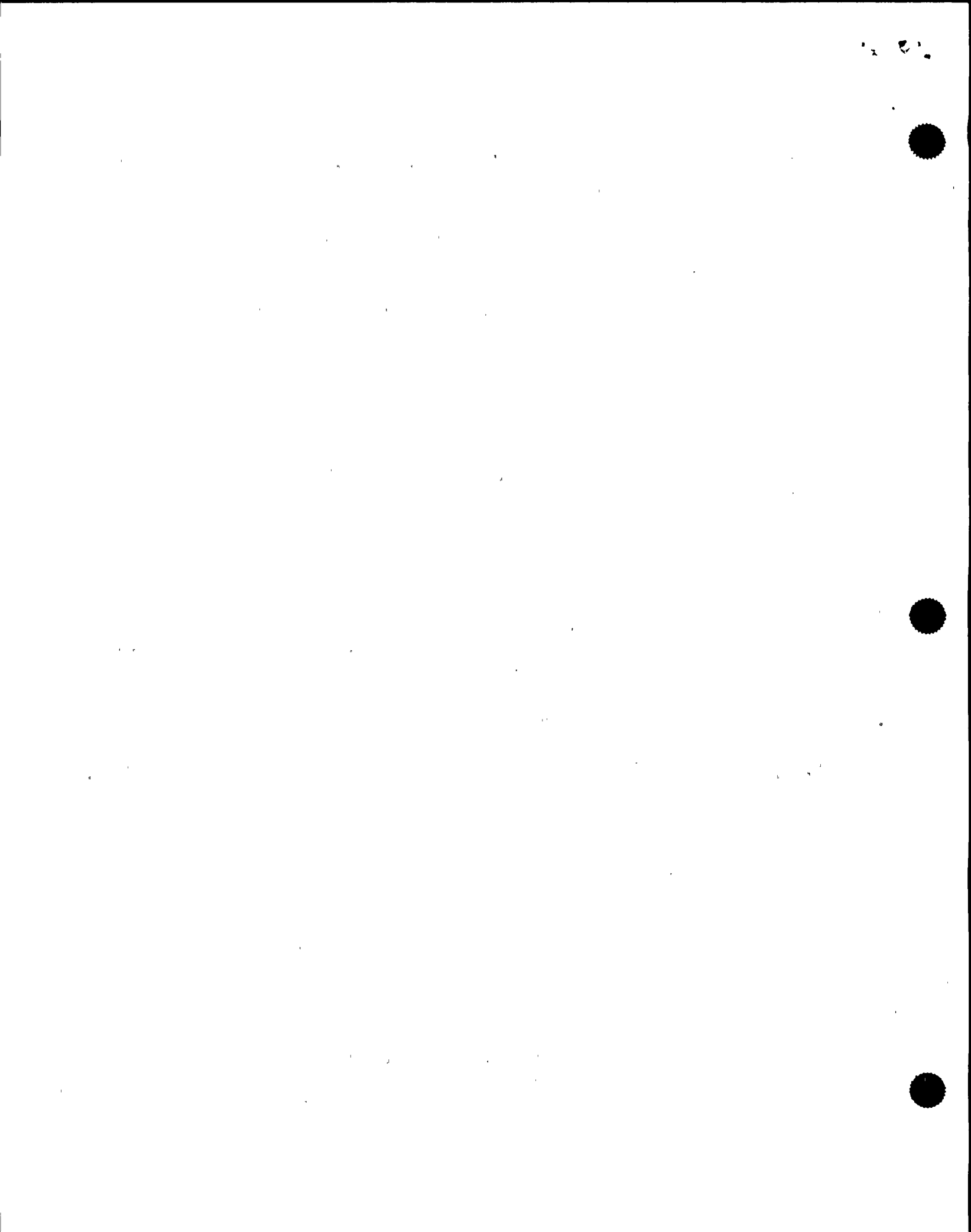
18 MR. CONTE: Oh, I see, so really a crosstie is  
19 within one emergency diesel generator room?

20 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

21 MR. CONTE: Okay.

22 MR. HOFFMAN: It's sits between the two tanks and  
23 the diesel to enable us to allow to charge the tank up to  
24 acceptable pressure.

25 MR. JORDAN: Do you isolate one tank and then





1 charge the other when you crosstie or are they both tied  
2 together?

3 MR. HOFFMAN: Both tied together.

4 MR. CONTE: Until they get charged.

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Until they get charged up and then  
6 we re-isolate the crosstie and both tanks are now separate  
7 again.

8 MR. CONTE: Okay, so that takes us to when you  
9 left, around 11:00.

10 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

11 MR. CONTE: Okay. I have some review questions  
12 here based on that chronology of what you gave us.

13 Can you be specific in terms of the building?

14 You mentioned an elevation but what portion of the  
15 building -- you were in the elevator?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. That was for the auxiliary  
17 service building.

18 MR. CONTE: Auxiliary service building. Does this  
19 elevator take you up and down past the Rad Protectio office  
20 or something?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: The Rad Protection office is located  
22 at the top of the elevator route, the 306.

23 MR. CONTE: You weren't in that area at all, 306?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: Well, that's where I was coming down  
25 from. I was coming down from the control room down the 261



1 elevation.

2 MR. CONTE: Okay, and you explained the symptom of  
3 the elevator being black, black with the exception of -- was  
4 there any lights in the elevator?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, there was. The floor  
6 indication light indicated between 2 and 3. The elevator  
7 seemed to stop momentarily and then continued down to 2,  
8 which is elevation 261.

9 MR. CONTE: When you come in on 261 of the aux  
10 service building, you found darkness?

11 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I did.

12 MR. CONTE: No emergency lighting?

13 MR. HOFFMAN: Did not seem to be. I did not  
14 notice any on -- actually made the phone call, reported back  
15 up to the control room. The stairways were dark also.

16 MR. JORDAN: Did you have a flashlight?

17 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I did.

18 MR. JORDAN: Glad you had a flashlight?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, I am. It got real dark.

20 MR. CONTE: The stairways in the aux service  
21 building were?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

23 MR. CONTE: How many stairways are in this aux  
24 service building, just that one?

25 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes. It gets from the 261 entrance



1 into the plant up to the control building. There's three  
2 flights of stairs.

3 MR. CONTE: And the nearest here--here was where?  
4 In that same building?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it was. It was probably from  
6 the elevator it was 35 feet away.

7 MR. CONTE: Was that black in that area too?

8 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, it was.

9 MR. CONTE: No emergency lighting?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Did not notice any.

11 The lighting was on and where we found the plant  
12 phone, which is in the locker room, the lighting was on in  
13 there though.

14 MR. CONTE: That's interesting.

15 [Laughter.]

16 MR. CONTE: Lighting in the stairways and  
17 elevators dark -- do the elevators have emergency lighting  
18 in them?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: I really couldn't tell you, off  
20 hand. I would have to look again.

21 MR. CONTE: Okay. Good. On monitoring reactor  
22 pressure and level can you tell me the highest and the  
23 lowest of the two parameters that you ever observed?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: What I can remember is we started  
25 out at a reactor pressure of 964 pounds, reactor water, the

11



1 highest you want for reactor water was off scale on my meter  
2 which is greater than 200 inches. The lowest I saw -- that  
3 I can remember reactor water getting was, I would have to  
4 say, not positively, but I would say in the 150 range -- 149  
5 range. The lowest -- reactor pressure continued on,  
6 dropping down -- I can't remember exactly what the pressure  
7 got to, it got down to 590, I do remember, but I think it  
8 continued on lowering after that.

9 I do know that it seemed to stop twice when it was  
10 decreasing. It seemed to settle out for a minute or two --

11 MR. CONTE: Level?

12 MR. HOFFMAN: Level. Yeah. It seemed to settle  
13 and then it continued on dropping again.

14 MR. CONTE: Okay. Do you happen to know what the  
15 RCIC initiation is -- initiation setting is?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm not really sure. I think it is  
17 -- well, single low level is, I think 158.8. I am not  
18 positive. And the SSS called to start at 159. I'm pretty  
19 sure that was the number he called and started it at.

20 As I said before, a licensed operator was doing  
21 many of those functions, just happened to be he gauge next  
22 to mine.

23 MR. CONTE: You must have overheard the -- I guess  
24 the operator who was controlling RCIC indicated going from  
25 automatic to manual, did he give a reason? Did you hear a





1 reason?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: The best that I can remember, as I  
3 said, I was more intently watching what I was told to do --  
4 was to do -- the flow was erratic and the flow meters seemed  
5 to erratic in auto. So, he announced he was switching over  
6 to manual.

7 MR. CONTE: The flow was erratic. Okay. Did you  
8 offer an explanation as to why the reactor level went high?  
9 Did you hear or did you know anything?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Not that I remember. I don't really  
11 remember why. The only thing I could think of, is as we  
12 started injecting flow, it came up and then even though we  
13 backed off, it was still coming on.

14 MR. CONTE: You didn't hear any emotional  
15 statement from anyone like "Oh no" or --

16 MR. HOFFMAN: No.

17 MR. CONTE: Okay.

18 MR. HOFFMAN: Everything was very professional in  
19 there.

20 MR. CONTE: And when he got that Level 8, he shut  
21 down RCIC?

22 MR. HOFFMAN: He was shut down before he hit Level  
23 8 if I remember correctly.

24 MR. CONTE: And that was -- is that normal -- did  
25 you happen to know if that is normal practice to shut down



1 RCIC before the Level 8 function comes in?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: I'm not trained in the control room  
3 aspects of the systems. I'm more into plant at this time.

4 MR. CONTE: That's a fair answer. All right.

5 Mike, jump in, if you've got anything.

6 MR. JORDAN: I've got just a couple questions.

7 Did -- you say it went off scale, high on level, did it stay  
8 there, did it come back down?

9 MR. HOFFMAN: It stayed there for a while and then  
10 came back down. It went -- on the wide range it went off  
11 scale and, as I said before, I'm not real familiar with the  
12 control rooms --

13 MR. JORDAN: Did it come back down to the point  
14 where they had to restart RCIC? Did it come back down and  
15 they were controlling it elsewhere outside of RCIC?

16 MR. HOFFMAN: It came back down, but they never  
17 restarted RCIC. They came back down within acceptable  
18 range.

19 MR. JORDAN: Do you know what range it was in?

20 MR. HOFFMAN: No, I can't remember, off hand. As  
21 I said, they started to control with condensate boosters.

22 MR. JORDAN: So as far as you know RCIC was only  
23 used one time?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

25 MR. JORDAN: Okay. You mentioned that you were at



1 the 250 foot area in the Hoggers, what building is that in?

2 MR. HOFFMAN: That is in the turbine building.

3 MR. JORDAN: Turbine building. And you had the  
4 RAD monitor that was close to the area alarming?

5 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

6 MR. JORDAN: And you read it at ten to the --

7 MR. HOFFMAN: Ten to the minus first.

8 MR. JORDAN: And then you said there was another  
9 alarm?

10 MR. HOFFMAN: Um hm.

11 MR. JORDAN: That you -- actually near that you  
12 came across? Do you have any idea where that was at? Same  
13 Elevation?

14 MR. HOFFMAN: Same elevation, the east end of the  
15 building versus the first alarm was on the west end of the  
16 building.

17 MR. JORDAN: And that one was alarming and it was  
18 reading?

19 MR. HOFFMAN: Ten to the minus one, again.

20 MR. JORDAN: Same thing?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. JORDAN: Okay. And at that time you notified  
23 the control room, is that correct?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: I notified the control room the  
25 first -- after they told me about the high radiation level



1 the 277 annunciator being in, I then looked around to make  
2 sure that the ones on my level -- because I'm right below  
3 that, weren't in and they turned out to be. I then told the  
4 control room I was leaving the area.

5 MR. JORDAN: Is the alarm an audible? Is it a  
6 visual -- what?

7 MR. HOFFMAN: It's a visual. The alarm that was  
8 going was visual. There is also audible, but the visual is  
9 what I noticed it was pretty loud down there. I didn't even  
10 get right next to it. I got close enough to be able to see  
11 what the level was and then proceeded out of the building.

12 MR. JORDAN: That's how you -- in other words you  
13 didn't hear the audible alarm, you noticed the visual  
14 alarm?

15 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

16 MR. JORDAN: Or a light, what's the --

17 MR. HOFFMAN: It's a flashing light. It's like a  
18 siren light or police light.

19 MR. JORDAN: Okay. So it's a red light that  
20 flashes, is that correct?

21 MR. HOFFMAN: That's correct.

22 MR. JORDAN: Okay. The communications at that  
23 time were working? What were you using?

24 MR. HOFFMAN: I was using the here-here system.  
25 By that time the UPS's -- our power had been restored to the





1 annunciators and here-here systems.

2 MR. JORDAN: So after that time you knew of no  
3 other problems as far communications with the control room?  
4 You were out in the plant doing other activities for the  
5 day?

6 MR. HOFFMAN: That is correct.

7 MR. JORDAN: Okay.

8 MR. CONTE: I'm done.

9 MR. JORDAN: So am I.

10 MR. CONTE: Let's go off the record.

11 [Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the taking of the  
12 interview was concluded.]

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceedings before the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission

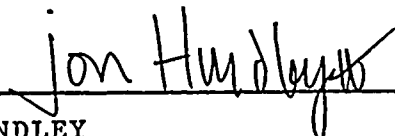
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were held as herein appears, and that this is the original transcript thereof for the file of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission taken by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under the direction of the court reporting company, and that the transcript is a true and accurate record of the foregoing proceedings.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JON HUNDLEY  
Official Reporter  
Ann Riley & Associates, Ltd.



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