

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

1 In the Matter of:
2 IE TMI INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW
3 of
4 Frank D. Telenko
5 Auxiliary Operator
6
7
8

9 Trailer #203
10 NRC Investigation Site
11 TMI Nuclear Power Plant
12 Middletown, Pennsylvania

13 May 19, 1979
14 (Date of Interview)

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21 NRC PERSONNEL:

22 Gregory P. Yuhas, Radiation Specialist
23 William H. Foster, Senior Inspector /Auditor
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FOSTER: The following interview is being conducted of Mr. Frank D. Telenko. Mr. Telenko is an auxiliary operator aide at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Facility, the present time is 4:16 p.m. Today's date is May 19, 1979. The place of the interview is Trailer #203, located immediately outside the south gate of TMI site. Individuals present for the interview are interviewer: Mr. Gregory P. Yuhas, radiation specialist, Region 7 my name is William H. Foster, I'm a senior inspector auditor with the Office of Inspector and Auditor, NRC. I'll be monitoring the interview. Prior to the interview being recorded Mr. Telenko was provided a document explaining his rights concerning information to be obtained regarding the incident at Three Mile Island. In addition Mr. Telenko was apprised at the purpose of the investigation, its scope, and the authority by which the Congress authorizes the NRC to conduct an investigation. On the second page of the advisement document Mr. Telenko has answered three questions, the questions and Mr. Telenko answers will now be recorded as part of the interview. Mr. Telenko do you understand the document?

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TELENKO: Yes.

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FOSTER: Do we have your permission to tape the interview?

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25
TELENKO: Yes.

1 FOSTER: Would you like a copy of the tape?
2

3 TELENKO: Yes.
4

5 FOSTER: Mr. Telenko at this time, if you would, give us a brief summary
6 of you academic background and employment history as they relate to the
7 nuclear industry?
8

9 TELENKO: I'm a high school graduate of the academic course. Upon
10 graduation of high school I enlisted in the Navy for a period of 6
11 years in the nuclear power program. Served a total time in the Navy of
12 seven years and approximately nine months with the last, I would imagine,
13 six years in the nuclear power field. Commissioned two nuclear submarines
14 and went through new construction on both. When I got out of service I
15 spent a little over two years working on industrial boilers and home
16 furnaces, and in 1973 I came to work for Metropolitan Edison as a
17 facility operator.
18

19 FOSTER: Ok, thank you Frank. At this point, I will turn you over to
20 Mr. Yuhas.
21

22 YUHAS: Mr. Telenko, while in the Navy, what was your job description?
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1 TELENKO: Upon discharge from the service I was an engine room supervisc.
2 I was a machinest mate and I'd qualified as engine room supervisor just
3 prior to discharge.
4

5 YUHAS: Did you go through the Engineering Laboratory Technician School?
6

7 TELENKO: No I did not.
8

9 YUHAS: Ok, so you are EWS qualified?
10

11 TELENKO: I went through the welding school. I did not go ELT school.
12 I didn't quite make the EWS.
13

14 YUHAS: What I'd like you to do now is describe how you became aware of
15 the incident that occurred on the 28th, when you came to work and
16 essentially what your job assignments are to the best of your recall
17 for the period from the 28th through Friday the 30th at midnight.
18

19 TELENKO: Well, the first information I had that anything was wrong was
20 listening to the news report on the radio at home. Then about between
21 10 and 10:30 in the morning I received a phone call from Bob Parnell,
22 shift foreman, telling me that there was a problem in Unit 2 and that
23 he would like me to report for work early. I had previously been
24 scheduled to come in the 3-11 shift. Needless to say, I got ready kind
25

1 of quickly and came into the plant. First, I was stopped at the obser-
2 vation center, then told to come down to the north gate at which time
3 the HP personnel got clearance for me to come on to the site. At that
4 time I reported directly to the Unit 1 control room and just got bits
5 and pieces as to what was going on and was asked to just more less
6 standby until I was needed. Basically, all I did the first four to
7 five hours was just sit back in the Unit 1 instrument shop. Later on
8 that evening, they had me go into the Unit 1 Auxiliary Building in the
9 bleed tank room and put rubber floor plugs in the drains. At approxi-
10 mately 11 or 12:00, they took us off the island out to the observation
11 center for something to eat and to take a break. About 1:00 they
12 brought us back in. They were going to do some plastic on the floor in
13 the basement of the Unit 2 auxiliary building. We put our heads together
14 and we talked them out of doing this. Just simply due to the fact that
15 if we put all this plastic down and we decided to pump the floor drains,
16 we wouldn't be able to drain the water off the floor. I would imagine
17 along around 3:00 they let us go home. Now its getting into a gray
18 area. I reported for work the following day which was a normal rest
19 day for me. I reported to the observation center at 3:00. They sent
20 us up to Crawford Station to be in standby and it was about 5 pm when
21 they decided they wouldn't need us and they sent us home. Then Friday
22 came out a normal shift of 11-7 and basically everything was run from
23 the observation center shuffling in to the plant and back out. Most of
24
25

1 that time was spent in Unit 1 either taking messages in the control
2 room or just running other little errands that needed to be run. On
3 Sunday....
4

5 YUHAS: That would have taken you into the period, through the period
6 concerned 0700 through the 31st? I'd like to go back now and ask you
7 about your entry to the Unit 1 auxiliary building bleed tank area. Can
8 you describe that in a little more detail for us?
9

10 TELENKO: In what respect as to ?
11

12 YUHAS: Who told you to enter the Unit 1 to place these rubber plugs?
13

14 TELENKO: I believe the request came from Jim Seelinger that they were
15 going to, ... they wanted to pump water into the bleed tank room and
16 that they needed the plugs installed. I was told that the plugs were
17 in the auxiliary building in a locker. No one had the key for it. We
18 had to cut the lock for the locker. We took the plugs down and we were
19 one plug short so we installed what we had and we waited until they got
20 some more plugs out the warehouse and they gave us an additional plug
21 to take down and put in the floor drain.
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23 YUHAS: Did you have an RWP to go in and do this work?
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TELENKO: I personally did not have an RWP. I signed in or an RWP to get into the Auxiliary Building, but specifically into the bleed tank room I did not have an RWP.

YUHAS: Did a health physics or rad tech accompany you on this task?

TELENKO: No, I had another auxiliary operator with the radiation instrument and we had an instrument man with us who had an air bottle who was pressurizing the floor plugs.

YUHAS: Did someone brief you on what the dose rates would be in a bleed tank prior to going down there?

TELENKO: No one briefed me on the levels in the bleed tank room but having operated in Unit 1 before being transferred to Unit 2 I was aware that the bleed tank room was at a higher radiation level than most of the plant and specifically under the tanks was a high radiation area. We wasted no time going in and getting out.

FOSTER: Tim Martin is now under the interview.

YUHAS: Who was the other auxiliary operator that went with you?

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1 TELENKO: I have to think. I believe it was either Jim Kimmey or Al
2 Curry one of those two I can't recall right off.

3
4 YUHAS: Can you recall the type of instrumentation you took with you?

5
6 TELENKO: It was an E Tri-20.

7
8 YUHAS: Is the bleed tank a locked high radiation area?

9
10 TELENKO: Yes it is.

11
12 YUHAS: Who provided you with the key to get in?

13
14 TELENKO: In the auxiliary building on the primary operator's key ring,
15 we have keys to different doors in the auxiliary building. I used the
16 key from the primary aux operator's key ring.

17
18 YUHAS: Did any Rad Chem Tech HP foreman or supervisor brief you prior
19 to making this entry?

20
21 TELENKO: I talked to Tom Mulleavy when he asked me where I was going.
22 He told us that we should not waste any time in there. I had had
23 previous knowledge of the radiation levels that it had been a high
24 radiation area for quite some time.

1 YUHAS: What did you all wear in terms of respiratory protection and
2 dosimetry protection?
3

4 TELENKO: Well I had low range dosimeter, my TLD, four ANTI-Cs and a
5 full face respiratory.
6

7 YUHAS: What sort of cartridge did you have on the respirator?
8

9 TELENKO: I believe it was the iodine respirator cartridge because it
10 was, I think they said the purple ones were for iodine and that's what
11 I had.
12

13 YUHAS: What sort of dose rates did you find in the bleed tank?
14

15 TELENKO: I wasn't carrying the meter, I was worried about getting the
16 plugs in and getting out. I think at the time I had only picked up
17 something like 10 or 12 mR in installing the six plugs in the floor.
18

19 YUHAS: Who was trying to convince you to put plastic on the floor of
20 the auxiliary building?
21

22 TELENKO: From what I gathered, when we came back in that night the
23 shift supervisor had had four people go and start putting plastic down
24 on a portion of the auxiliary building. They had not got finished and
25

1 they picked up quite a bit of radiation from what I understand. To the
2 best of my knowledge I think it was Greg Hitz that I talked to and
3 convinced that it wouldn't be a good idea to put the plastic down due
4 to the fact that it would clog up the floor drains. He talked to, I
5 believe it was, someone from NRC that was at that time in the shift
6 supervisor's office and they figured that it was a good idea not to put
7 it down.

8
9 YUHAS: Do you remember the name of any of the individuals who were
10 first involved in placing the plastic?

11
12 TELENKO: Off of our shift the only name that I can think of right off
13 hand is Jim Hendrick. I know there were three other people with him but
14 right now I can't remember who they were.

15
16 YUHAS: Can you describe what your normal assignments are at TMI?

17
18 TELENKO: Normal assignments are making a tour of the plant depending
19 on whether we are assigned to primary side or secondary side, keeping
20 an eye on equipment, checking oil levels, pump leakages, valve leakages,
21 doing condensate polishing, its various operating ...

22
23 YUHAS: What plant are you normally assigned to 1 or 2?
24
25

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1 TELENKO: Right now, Unit 2.

2
3 YUHAS: How long have you been assigned to Unit 2?

4
5 TELENKO: I would say just about a year.

6
7 YUHAS: Can you describe for me an incident that occurred somewhere
8 around the first of the month or the second when you entered the auxiliary
9 building with another operator and when you came out your O to 5R
10 pencil read at 3.8 R?

11
12 TELENKO: That was when we were getting ready to go on the hydrogen
13 recombiner. We were going to pressurize the lines and check for leakage
14 on the flanges where the hydrogen recombiner was hooked up. At that
15 time without thinking of the volume of pipe I had to put air in, the
16 instrument shop gave me a small flask of air which required a quarter
17 inch rubber tubing to hook up to a test connection. They told me that
18 if I needed additional quarter inch tubing that there was tubing by the
19 Hayes gas analyzer which is right outside the make-up tank room. Two
20 of us entered the auxiliary building and that was the only time that I
21 didn't carry the teletector. The person I was with carried the teletector,
22 went up on the second floor 322 elevation where we were going to work
23
24
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1 and I went down to the Hayes gas analyzer room to grab another piece of
2 tubing. I didn't know what radiation levels I had picked up until I
3 came out of the auxiliary building that night.
4

5 YUHAS: Has anyone instructed you as to what the dose rates were in the
6 cubical that contained the Hayes gas analyzer prior to making that
7 entry?
8

9 TELENKO: No, because I think probably most of that was my fault,
10 because where I was going and what I was going to be doing the people
11 advised me what the radiation levels were. This was a side trip that
12 one of the instrument men told me that if you do need other parts this
13 is where they are. Normally, I would not have gone in there at all.
14

15 YUHAS: What is located in that room beside the Hayes gas analyzer that
16 would have been a high dose rate?
17

18 TELENKO: Well in that room itself is the letdown flow monitor and
19 behind cinder block walls are two letdown filters and on the other side
20 of the wall on the other side of the room is the make-up tank.
21

22 YUHAS: Did you suspect that there may be very high dose rates in that
23 cubical?
24
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1 TELENKO: Yes, that is why when I opened the door, I ran in and I ran
2 out.

3
4 YUHAS: By technical specifications are you required to have a dose
5 rate indicating device when you are in an area greater than 100 millirem per
6 hour?

7
8 TELENKO: By my RWP I was required to have a dose rate meter.

9
10 YUHAS: So you were aware that you were in a very high area and didn't
11 know what the dose rate was?

12
13 TELENKO: Yes.

14
15 YUHAS: The licensee evaluated this dose. Your pocket dosimeter indi-
16 cated 3.8 R. What were the conclusions of the licensee's evaluation of
17 the dose you received?

18
19 TELENKO: Well, immediately after it happened I was sent to the observa-
20 tion center to have my TLD read and the TLD, I believe, it read around
21 550 or 560 mR as to what I had picked up.

22
23 YUHAS: Do you remember who read your TLD?
24
25

1 TELENKO: I believe it was Ed Egenrider.

2
3 YUHAS: Who was with you and what did he pick up without going into
4 that room?

5
6 TELENKO: I don't remember who I was with that night.

7
8 YUHAS: What did your, 0 to 5R pocket dosimeter read before you began
9 that entry?

10
11 TELENKO: Both dosimeters were reading zero before I made an entry.

12
13 YUHAS: What was the second dosimeter, what range?

14
15 TELENKO: 0 to 200 mR.

16
17 YUHAS: What are reading came out?

18
19 TELENKO: It was off scale.

20
21 YUHAS: What was the final dose assigned on your NRC Form 5 as a result
22 of this entry?

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TELENKO: I believe they added the previous dosage I had received, I think the total was 740, 750 mR.

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YUHAS: Did the licensee representative offer or offer an explanation of why he was invalidating the pocket dosimeter readings?

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TELENKO: Well, I personally didn't feel that I had pick up that much radiation and I had bumped both dosimeters a couple of times on the 322 elevation as I was doing a valve lineup. And to coincide with this Tom Mulleavy told me he would check the dosimeter to see if it was accurate. What he told me was he had checked it against two different sources and that it had read high under both tests. I did some quick calculations on myself and I figured I would have picked up close to 500 mR. You know with the amount of time that I'd spent in what they said was a very high field and when my TLD said only slightly over 500 I figured it was pretty accurate.

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YUHAS: What dose rate did you do or did you use in your evaluation to come up with this 500?

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TELENKO: I think the figure at the time was, was it a 100 R field, I think that I figured that I had spent a total of 15 seconds at the most.

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1 YUHAS: That dose rate that you're using was that measured after your
2 entry?

3
4 TELENKO: Yes, this was after I had come back out and had gone to the
5 observation center and had my TLD read.

6
7 YUHAS: Was that dose rate measured inside the cubical or at door
8 before you went in?

9
10 TELENKO: I think it was when you opened the door. This is what the
11 reading was, the 100 mR was inside the room.

12
13 YUHAS: In your trip into that room did you not have to open the door,
14 walk pass the letdown floor monitors and MUV-720 and then go pick up
15 the tubing, come back past the monitors, then back out the door?

16
17 TELENKO: Yes, I did.

18
19 YUHAS: This is where you estimate the 15 seconds from the time you
20 went in?

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1 TELENKO: From the time I opened the door until the time I was back
2 out, because the room is not that big and I knew where the instrumenta-
3 tion equipment is kept on the other side of the Hayes gas analyzer.
4 Because during operations we are always in there reading the Hayes gas
5 analyzer and I knew exactly where I was going and where the tubing was.
6

7 YUHAS: The linear distance from the door to the tubing cabinet is
8 about how far?
9

10 TELENKO: I would say 15 feet at the most.
11

12 YUHAS: You were wearing Scott air pack?
13

14 TELENKO: Yes, I was.
15

16 YUHAS: Did Mulleavy indicate to you how your dosimeter responded, how
17 much high 50%, 25%, 100% in the test that he conducted?
18

19 TELENKO: No, he did not.
20

21 YUHAS: Did you have whole body counts since the incident?
22

23 TELENKO: No, I haven't.
24
25

1 YUHAS: For the benefit of Mr. Martin I would appreciate it if you
2 would describe those duties and assignments that you perform as an A
3 auxiliary operator in Unit 2, especially with reference to periodic
4 surveillance in the auxiliary feed system?
5

6 TELENKO: Well in the time that I have been in Unit 2 I have never had
7 to do any surveillance of any kind on the auxiliary feed system, so I
8 really can't help you out there.
9

10 YUHAS: At this time I would like to give you the opportunity to bring
11 forth any comments or concerns that you might have in general about the
12 way the incident was handled or any other problems that might come to
13 light while you worked here?
14

15 TELENKO: The only thing that really gave me an uneasy feeling was the
16 way it was handled by the press I guess. I would leave here thinking I
17 had some idea of what was happening, but by the time I got home or read
18 the newspaper or listened to TV or radio I had a tremendous amount of
19 doubt as to is this the same place I just left. I was really confused
20 and worried about you know whose lying to me or am I missing the boat.
21 In fact I'm still not straightened out I don't think.
22

23 YUHAS: You mean to indicate that you are doubting what the company was
24 telling you, you had to believe the press?
25

1
2 TELENKO: No, but its hard to convince your neighbors that you think
3 you know what's going on when the paper and television are telling them
4 something completely different.

5 YUHAS: Two more questions, one is: Do you have any idea the amount of
6 the dose the people were received in placing the plastic in the Unit 2
7 auxiliary building to a 28] elevation mission?
8

9 TELENKO: Just from hearsay, I thought I heard someone say they picked
10 up between 14-1700 mR.
11

12 YUHAS: That would be a piece or total?
13

14 TELENKO: The one person in particular, I thought he said 14 or 1700
15 that he had picked up.
16

17 YUHAS: Do you remember that name.
18

19 TELENKO: I believe that was Mr. Hetrick.
20

21 YUHAS: The other additional question I have is do you have any any
22 reasons to believe that any individual may have deliberately percipated
23 or may have aggravated the incident that occurred at Unit 2 on the
24 28th?
25

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2 TELENKO: No, I don't.

3
4 YUHAS: If no one has any other questions at this time, I would like to
5 thank Mr. Telenko for his cooperation and I don't have anything else.

6
7 FOSTER: Ok. Thank you, Frank. This interview is concluded at 4:40
8 p.m.
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