



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION I
631 PARK AVENUE
KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19406

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May 18, 1979

Docket No. 50-223

University of Lowell
ATTN: Dr. Leon E. Beghian
Acting Director, Nuclear Center
1 University Avenue
Lowell, Massachusetts 01854

Gentlemen:

The enclosed IE Circular 79-08, is forwarded to you for information.
If there are any questions related to the contents or intent of the Circular
or its attachments, please contact this office.

Sincerely,


Boyce H. Grier
Director

Enclosures:
IE Circular No. 79-08
w/attachments

cc w/encls:
Dr. J. Phelps, Professor in Charge of Nuclear Reactor
T. Wallace, Reactor Supervisor

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

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ATTEMPTED EXTORTION - LOW ENRICHED URANIUM

Background

In January 1979, a temporary contractor employee who was working at the General Electric plant in Wilmington, North Carolina, allegedly entered the plant and removed a drum containing two 5-gallon cans of low enriched uranium from the facility with the intention of extorting money for the return of the material. The Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted an intensive investigation leading to the arrest of the employee on February 1, 1979. All material was recovered and returned to the plant.

Discussion

Based on preliminary information provided the NRC, the theft was allegedly carried out in the following manner:

On Friday, January 26, 1979, the subject worked the day shift. At 10:50 p.m. the same day he drove back to the plant and entered with the night shift. He showed his Florida driver's license at the entrance gate instead of his yellow contractor badge because it had a blue background similar to that on the picture badge which he thought was required to gain access to the area of the plant that he wanted to penetrate. He had allegedly gained access using his driver's license on previous occasions.

Once inside the plant, the subject would have been guided by gates and fences into a parking area had it not been for the fact that one gate had been removed to allow installation of truck scales. He proceeded down the unprotected road to an area adjacent to the building he wanted to enter.

After the subject entered the building through a personnel door, he proceeded to his normal working station which was the Chem Tech Lab and entered, using his own key. In the lab he picked up his protective clothing, a two wheel cart used to move 55 gallon drums and a container used to ship chemicals. The container could hold two 5-gallon cans. He then proceeded to a door leading up a stairwell into the radiation controlled area. The door was normally locked even though not required by regulations; however, at this time it was slightly ajar due to malfunction of the locking mechanism. Once inside the door, the subject put on his protective clothing.

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