

REPORT OF INTERVIEW

On August 28, 1979, Blaine F. Fabian, Manager of Communications Services, Metropolitan Edison (Met-Ed) was interviewed by William Foster and Robert Chin. The interview was conducted at Met-Ed's corporate offices, 2800 Pottsville Pike, Reading, Pa., and lasted four hours. Mr. Fabian asked and was given permission to tape record the interview. A copy of the tapes were made available to the Special Inquiry Group.

Following is a summary of the highlights of Mr. Fabian's interview.

- At the time of the TMI accident, the Communication Services Department consisted of a staff of 12, including clerical, administrative and professional personnel. A number of the professional personnel had been with Met-Ed a short period of time. Members of the staff had no formal crisis communications training, although they were used to operating under pressure to meet deadlines. Nine of the staff members participated in answering media calls early in the morning of March 28. As the volume of media calls increased, individuals were recruited throughout the company to help out until Met-Ed had approximately 30 people taking calls from the media (see Attachment 1).

- Herbein called Fabian at approximately 7:15 a.m. and the two of them drafted Met-Ed's initial public statement on the accident (see Attachment 2). Fabian would take notes and read

sentences back to Herbein until agreement was reached on the final statement. Fabian thought Herbein mentioned high radiation levels in the containment building and radioactive water on the Aux. Building floor. He did not include this information in the statement because it was preliminary and the purpose of the statement was to advise people there had been a problem with the plant and Met-Ed was working on it -- not to give a detailed description of the accident. Although Herbein called back shortly thereafter and advised of a general emergency, Fabian did not include this in the statement because it was already drafted and agreed upon. Herbein gave no instructions on how to respond to media questions.

- Fabian notified Bill Murray, GPU Vice President of Communications and made sure Walter Creitz, Met-Ed President knew a site emergency had been declared. This is normal procedure. He should have been advised much earlier than the Herbein call that there had been a reactor trip.
- Fabian held a staff meeting at about 8:00 a.m. and advised of what he knew and passed out the statement. About 8:20 a.m. while discussing the need to put together background information on TMI, the media calls increased to the point Fabian released the staff to answer calls. He advised the staff to read

the statement and answer questions on background information. The staff was not directed to refuse media questions on plant status outside the prepared statement.

- Fabian in a meeting with Creitz learned Creitz was advising government officials who inquired that there were off-site radiation readings. He thought Creitz got this information from Gary Miller. He attempted to verify this with George Troffer who was advising on technical matters. Troffer was unable to confirm this in a 9:30 a.m. conversation with Miller (see Attachment 3) so Fabian continued to use his earlier statement.
- Creitz and Fabian drafted Met-Ed's 10:00 a.m. statement and Troffer revised it (see Attachment 4). Fabian did not remember any discussions on including high radiation levels in the containment building. Fabian did not include the general emergency declaration because it would have only scared people and the statement was not designed to go into detail. He did not remember a discussion on this point. Fabian acknowledged he should have given this point more consideration.
- At 11:45 a.m. Traffer notified Fabian and Creitz of off-site readings above background levels. Henry Robidoux, Vice President of Operations and Fabian put together the noon statement and Creitz approved it (see Attachment 5).

- Fabian requests Creitz to hold an afternoon press briefing and leaves a message with Herbein's secretary to this effect. Herbein gets word back that not enough facts are known at this point. However, about 1:15 p.m. Herbein, who is at the Observation Center and Creitz agree by phone there is no way for Herbein to avoid briefing the press outside on the lawn as he left to meet Lt. Governor Scranton.
- About 2:00 p.m. Creitz at Fabian's urging agrees to hold a press conference Thursday morning. For a variety of reasons the Hershey Motor Lodge was selected as the location and the details were worked out by 4:30 p.m.
- Shortly after this a series of discussions take place on the feasibility of Creitz appearing on the Today Show and Good Morning America at the network's request. Fabian, Creitz, Murray and Herman Dieckamp participate in the discussions and Creitz decides to appear. About 8:40 p.m. Creitz departs for the Observation Center to be briefed for the appearance.
- About 7:00 a.m. Thursday morning Fabian and Judy Botvin leave for Hershey to prepare for the news conference. Howard Seldomridge is left in charge at Reading.
- Fabian advised earlier on Wednesday he called Karl Abraham and requested his participation in the press conference, but Abraham declined because NRC wanted to maintain its independence. Abraham

was asked to participate because Fabian felt the media would also have questions for the NRC to determine NRC's view of the situation, which at that time he believed was the same as Met-Ed's. Fabian thought Creitz advised the Governor's office of the press conference, but didn't think he asked them to participate. Met-Ed/State interface was handled at the executive level.

- Dick Hyde of Hill and Knowlton, Fabian and Murray discuss future media relationships. About 4:30 p.m. it is agreed to set up a news center at the Hershey Motor Lodge and hold subsequent press conferences at the American Legion Hall in Middletown.
- The news center was operational by 11:30 a.m. Friday. The center had six phone lines, one of which was used solely for outgoing calls. (See Attachment 1 for news center staff.)
- Troffer was to get information from the plant and the Observation Center and pass it on to the staff. However, because personnel at these locations were busy dealing with the accident, information was very difficult to come by.
- The decision to have one spokesman was first discussed on Friday night between Creitz and Murray but nothing was resolved. It was felt this might not be a bad idea because information from different sources was leading to conflicting statements. On Saturday, Murray had a conversation with individuals who Fabian assumed were White House representatives. Murray and Denton discuss this subject and Murray later

relates to Creitz that Denton had no problems with acting as sole spokesman and Creitz agrees to proceed in this manner. Fabian said it was his understanding Met-Ed had the prerogative to continue to make public statements if they disagreed with what NRC was saying.

- After this decision, the news center would only confirm previous public statements made by Met-Ed and NRC. Asked why the news center didn't give out Met-Ed's position on the bubble, Saturday, Fabian said it would have been of no use since Herbein said this at the earlier press conference and the press essentially called him a liar. Fabian felt in view of Met-Ed's loss of credibility information of this nature would have only made the problem worse in the eyes of the public. Fabian did say, however, if people in the news center were asked Met-Ed's position they would give the information but nothing was volunteered.
- Fabian left Troffer in charge of the news center and instructed him to work closely with Hyde.
- On Monday morning Fabian in the presence of Dieckamp and Murray was asked by Joe Fouchard if someone from Met-Ed had publicly stated the bubble was gone. Fouchard, who was upset, advised Murray and Dieckamp NRC didn't agree with this. Upon learning Troffer had made the statement, Fabian called Troffer and advised him such statements were to be made by NRC. Fabian didn't think Fouchard asked Met-Ed to retract

the statement nor did he remember telling Troffer to have AP retract the story.

- Fabian felt the media chose to believe NRC as opposed to Met-Ed. This was particularly attributed to the lack of access Met-Ed communicators had to correct information. He said the media could not comprehend how the utility could run the plant and not be aware of every detail with respect to the accident.
- Fabian felt Met-Ed would be faulted for 1) promising to return phone calls and then not being able to do so because the lines were tied up; 2) being the sole source of information early on while being virtually unaccessable; and 3) security personnel keeping the press away from trailers where experts were working on the accident. This left a bad impression with the press.

attendant 1

PERSONS ASSISTING COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS, TRAILER #1, TMI, MARCH 31 THROUGH APRIL.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES - MET-ED

Blaine Fabian (Managerial)
David Klucsik
Donald Curry
Ray Hofmann (Photographer)

CONSUMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT - MET-ED

Weldom Spangler
Richard Miller
Gerald Parks

TMI OBSERVATION CENTER

William Gross

GENERAL PUBLIC UTILITIES SERVICE CORP. - COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Kenneth McKee
John A. Dunn
William B. Murray, Vice President

JERSEY CENTRAL POWER & LIGHT CO. - COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Samuel Laird
Ed Sharrat
John Cononico

PENNSYLVANIA ELECTRIC CO. - COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Sanford Polon
William Stephens (Photographer)
James Johnson
John Harrington

TMI PLANT - SECRETARIAL

Cecilia Korchnak

PERSONS HELPING ANSWER MEDIA CALLS AT READING DURING FIRST SEVERAL DAYS OF
ACCIDENT, MARCH 28 THROUGH MARCH 31.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Howard Seldomridge (later briefly at Hershey)
Judith Botvin
David Klucsik (later to Hershey and TMI)
Donald Curry (later to Hershey and TMI)
Willard Vollertsen
Forrest Miller
Patti Seasholtz
Kim Leibensperger
Blaine F. Fabian (1st day only)

CONSUMER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Gerald Parks
Nancy Wenrich
Robert Speiss
Weldon Spangler
Allen Steffy
Dawn (Karabinos) Pennington
Richard Miller
Margaret Lee

RATES DEPARTMENT

Edmund Kolodziej
Craig Neider
Diane (Glass) Work

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Irvin Godboldte
Deborah Reinert
Judith Ibach
John Wizeman

GENERATION DIVISION

Richard Klingaman
George Troffer (later at Hershey)
John Hilbish
Paul Christman
Michael Buring
Randee Sherman

ADMINISTRATION

Jack Guerin
David Epple

PERSONS ASSISTING COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS AT HERSHEY FROM MARCH 30 THROUGH
APRIL 20.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES - MET-ED

Blaine Fabian (Managerial & Traveling)
David Klucsik (moved to TMI later)
Donald Curry (moved to TMI later)

HILL & KNOWLTON

Harold Piety
Annette DeLorenzo
Richard Hyde (half-time)
Gregg Venne (short time)

TMI OBSERVATION CENTER

William R. Gross (moved to TMI later)

ADMINISTRATION - MET-ED

Jack H. Thomas

SECRETARIAL - LEBANON DIVISION OR TMI

Janice Esworthy
Pat Noll
Norma Hummel
Dianne Dearment

PENNSYLVANIA ELECTRIC CO.

William Stephens (Photographer)
Sanford Polon (moved to TMI later)
John Harrington (moved to TMI later)
James Johnson (moved to TMI later)

JERSEY CENTRAL POWER & LIGHT CO.

Samuel Laird (moved to TMI later)
Ed Sherrat (moved to TMI later)

2
ATTACHMENT *

Initial Statement, 7:30 A.M., March 28, 1979

"The nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island Unit 2 was shutdown as prescribed when a malfunction related to a feedwater-pump occurred about 4:00 a.m., Wednesday (March 28). The entire unit was systematically shut down and will be out of service for about a week while equipment is checked and repairs made."

ATTACHMENT 2

Transcript of phone call from Gary Miller at TMI about 9:30 A.M., March 28, 1979, to George Troffer, Reading, to assist in providing info for Met-Ed Communications Services staff by reporting on what he said to Lt. Governor Scranton.

MILLER: Lt. Governor - - I had no choice but to talk to him.

What I said and its probably not in very good verbage is that this morning very early we experienced a turbine trip. Two problems were in the secondary plant not the nuclear plant. When the unit trips from 100 percent, the reactor sometimes trips from 100 percent and it did. There was very high power. That's not a problem and not unexpected. When the reactor trips due to high pressure, its one of the parameters that normally trips the reactor. At the same time it was in the reactor building and due to the high pressure we had some relief valve lift which released from the reactor coolant to the building floor. This was not a break or a leak or anything that was designed to release at a high pressure. Obviously on all reactor pressure that doesn't occur. But it didn't on this one. That gave us indication of reactor building radioactivity because of the reactor coolant being released to the floor of the building. It's got radioactivity in it.

In addition to this the plant obviously experienced a pressure and temperature change fairly fast. I didn't say this to them -- I'm just saying it to the group. I was on the phone with a nuclear engineer over there so he knows about fuel pins. I said yes we may have had some fuel pin leakage. I don't know that right now. That's part of small term assessment on this thing and that's economic. He asked if I had any melting on fuel. I said I don't have any indication of melted fuel, but I may have had some fuel pin leakage which is not abnormal in the industry. I didn't say any at the present but I did say that we had reactor coolant released in the building which was giving radioactivity on the monitor.

When we get that, I said our emergency plan mandates that when I see it in the reactor building I assume it's getting out. Therefore, I go into the general emergency. I fully gear-up like I already got an

emergency in the public. That means that I put people on stations, I closed the gates, I get the State Police, I make all the phone calls and I say subsequent to doing everything in the plant we have had confirmation very rapidly the number 1. (?) From the time the incident started we have had no release to the environment especially above background. We have had no indication of a millirem an hour that I know of. We know where the wind is moving -- it is moving slowly to the west. We have people at the west site boundary. We had a helicopter fly over to Goldsboro. We had the meters taken out at York Haven -- if I have to go back I will. Never had any indication. We have been in communications with Molloy in the State for most of the day. We had no action level by the plan for the public.

We do not expect any additional or any release. We are in the process of taking the plant to a cold shutdown to evaluate the situation and that evaluation is probably more economically damaging than anything else -- from the public standpoint.

Is Troffer there?

TROFFER: Yes.

MILLER: I don't expect any effect on the public. That's what I had said to people. I didn't have any time to think about it.

TROFFER: That sounds good. Did anybody have an overdose?

MILLER: Nobody had one. Nobody had an overdose or an overexposure. We have surveyed all the areas internally and roped the appropriate areas off.

We had nobody, as a result of the incident, that got any overexposure. We have taken reactor coolant samples afterwards. We may have used up a lot of quarterly doses of some people. I had nothing at the time of the incident. I may have had some exposures of people during the action

we needed to take in the correction of this thing in the plant. I have some people that I'm not totally sure of but I don't believe that we have anybody overexposed. And we didn't overexpose anybody at the time of the incident do to anything. For example, I have a chemist foreman that went into a room to get a sample for me. He may have gotten a fairly good dose. I wouldn't expect that he exceeded his limit.

OK, George. When I come back and re-assess this thing I may find some doses higher than I expect right now because I've had people doing things that must be done. I've got full dosimetry on anybody out there -- full body count and everything else. That's too much detail but that's just so you know. I will say I've had nobody overexposed. And I will say that we will have to fully evaluate that as a result of the incident when we can collect all the people from this thing. It will effect nobody inadvertently, George.

TROFFER: Do you know when we will be able to decide when people should come to work -- I think we are thinking about the Observation Center overcrowding.

MILLER: The best thing is that I am keeping them here now. I guess I wanted to be damn sure I had total control of the cooldown before I worried about that. I have had some people come to work. I've got one guy in charge of the Observation Center.

I believe that it's Gary Hahn. I have had Shovlin bring in whoever he needed. I've sent the contractors that didn't get there home.

TROFFER: So we did not do that. We did not call of the contractors and send them home.

MILLER: I didn't call them off. There were some on-site but the ones that went to the center I probably sent home. We did send them home. We made that

decision. It's just been too hard to worry about them. They probably went home anyway. I've been here since 7:00 in the morning and I've been up since 4:00 and I don't think I'll worry about the economic consequences of the contractors. To get them out of our way to be honest with you. If anybody was on-site I kept them to use them.

KLINGAMAN: We did not send our people home though, right Gary.

MILLER: I've got them on hold at the Observation Center. I put Gary Hahn in charge to be sure that they didn't go home or wander around like what happened to me in August. I have brought on those people that Shovlin needs. Through him. I've got to go back and assess the people right now. Quite frankly, up to now its been Jack, Lee Rodgers and the plant -- I've haven't had a shot at that. Jim Seelinger's in charge of that and he's pretty aware of what we're doing.

I just talked to the State and I gave them the scenerio that I just gave you, but not with that kind of detail. So they're going to release something whether I like it or not probably.

I did talk to Maggie (DER) and Dornsife which I had known personally. I'm pretty sure I know them well enough that they will release something that will help. I told Maggie that if she has any problems getting us she should call Jack's office and he'll talk to her. I think you should tell Norene that she shouldn't treat Maggie as someone she doesn't know -- if she doesn't know her -- in case I need something. She's probably going to get a lot of questions from management over at the Governor's office.

TROFFER: I think we ought to go ahead cancel this Friday tour now.

MILLER: Yeah, I love that idea. George, I'll tell you what. I'm not sure that I'll be working here Friday! Just kidding. If there's anything else that you need I'll be in the Unit #2 Control Room. You can get me through that. I think you ought to release something. I think we should.

KLINGAMAN: I think I better verify one thing. There are rumors going back and forth as to what we have. My understanding is that what we have is a general emergency declared sometime this morning. And it's still an official general emergency.

MILLER: The emergency was declared sometime around 7:00. I guess I could be off a little bit.

KLINGMAN: Yes, I got a call around 7:15.

MILLER: We did declare a general emergency here -- that's true.

TROFFER: The sooner we back properly from a general to a site, the better.

MILLER: The reason we have not, and you're right George, is because to be honest with you we've been testing the plant. We don't know where the hell the plant was going. See the situation we're in is a delicate one because we actually have plant integrity. If we had a leak we'd be all right -- as far as we'd have a lot more economic consequences. We've been trying to figure out how to cool down in the most expeditious fashion without releasing and without damaging too much. That's taking a pretty hard assessment. I'll work on getting out of the emergency right now.

ATTACHMENT ^{d/} ~~B~~

We had a turbine trip early this morning due to a feedwater problem in the secondary side of the plant (not a nuclear problem). This caused the reactor to trip on high pressure, which was followed by the pressurizer relief valves relieving, which resulted in a radioactive water release in the reactor building.

Since this radioactive coolant water was released inside the reactor building, this led to the emergency plan implementation. Radiation monitoring teams have been dispatched on site and off site to monitor for possible external radioactive releases. None has been found, and we do not expect any.

We are presently bringing the plant down to an orderly cold shut-down condition, with no consequences to the public expected.

10 Am.
3/28/79

ATTACHMENT ⁵ ~~2~~

Statement Prepared For Answering Press Queries As Of Noon, March 28, 1979

At 4:00 a.m. Wednesday, the reactor at TMI Unit 2 was automatically tripped and shut down due to a mechanical malfunction in the System.

All procedures dictated by state and regulatory authorities have been followed, including the routine notification of state Civil Defense, Environmental, and police authorities.

In accordance with procedure, radiation levels are being monitored in and around the plant. At this time, there have been no recordings of any significant levels of radiation, and none are expected outside the plant. No evacuation of the local population is indicated at this time. The reactor is being cooled according to design by the reactor coolant system and should be cooled by the end of the day. There is no danger of a meltdown.

Unit 1 at TMI is presently out of operation for a routine refueling. The two units together produce about 1700 mw of electricity. There were no injuries either to plant workers or to the public.