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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE
ACCIDENT AT THREE MILE ISLAND

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DEPOSITION of U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION, REGION NO. I, by KARL ABRAHAM, held at
the offices of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Region I, 631 Park Avenue, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania,
on the 16th day of August 1979, commencing at 2:00 p.m.,
before Robert Zerkin, Notary Public of the State of
New York.

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ERRATA SHEET

Corrections to (date) August 16, 1979 Deposition of Karl Abraham

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>To Read</u>
3	20	that we have	that they have
4	14	that can understand	who can understand
6	6	New York,	Newark,
6	8	an IEE person	an information person
6	13	was increasing the	was increasing; the
6	15	it, and had	it, and it had
6	19	Director	Deputy Director
7	6	New York	Newark
7	18	support staff	subordinate staff
8	3	Chief of the Operations,	Chief of the Operations Branch
8	7	"Karl, going	He said "Karl, we're going
8	8	office; been	office; there has been
8	24	and only four	and there are only four
14	15	NRC belongs to the	NRC comes under, such as the
14	16	Enforcement. Nuclear	Enforcement and the Office of
14	19	officers	offices
14	21	is the director of	is the Office of
14	21	Mr. Fouchard,	Mr. Fouchard, the director,
15	15	the branch here	the Region here
17	8	the news media used to call the office	the news media are used to calling this office
17	22	really get out	really should get out
19	2	the information;	the information.
19	3	that turned out	That turned out
19	11	real accidents. The	real accidents, the
19	13	planned	manned
19	14	out taking pictures with	out and have taken pictures of people with
19	15	arm to	arm; to
20	7	get	got
20	15	Jim Younger	Jim Joyner
20	16	Dick Keimig from Operations	Dick McGaughy from Construction
20	17	Gary Schneider	Gary Snyder
21	10	was no way	was in no way
21	22	Frank R. dergan	Frank Ingram
24	4 & 5	until this was assigned	until there were assigned
24	5	Group to two	group two
24	7 & 8	Bob Banero and Tom Elsasser from Headquarters.	Bob Bernero from Headquarters Tom Elsasser from Region I.



ERRATA SHEET

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<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>To Read</u>
24	9	side	site
24	10	and Camden and so on,	and Command Center,
31	3	"Let me know.	"Let's see now.
33	9	are somebody	want somebody
33	12	Jan Strassner	Jan Strasma
33	13	Jan Strassmer	Jan Strasma
35	16	Beer Report	BEIR Report
35	19	Dr. Sterngrass	Dr. Sternglass
36	3	I said,	They said,
36	4	get started on that.	get started on that."
36	5	happened," but that	happened. But that
37	25	have looked to more	have liked to have more
38	16	with, the potential	with, that the potential "
38	24	problem, am I	problem - am I
39	9	that was the number	those were the numbers
39	25	somebody in my background	somebody with my background
45	9	lead line	headline
46	23	and argued	and we argued
47	15 & 16	your press release.	your press release, I told him.
47	20	wrong on it.	wrong on it, we found out later.
47	25	metamorphized	metamorphosed
48	2	Public Affairs liaison	Public Affairs Officer and into a liaison
48	12	to get pff so	to get off TV so
48	12	tell him that I said,	tell him that. I said
50	17	Insert for the record	(Lombardo's)
50	20	page	phone
51	24 & 25	Governor the press release --	Governor, reading the press release --
53	4	, and said to	, and I said to
53	25	Unit 1 fuel	Unit 1 refueling
60	3	that is very important	that are very important
65	10	I was told by somebody on-site	I was told it was by some company official on-site
66	18	NRR	NRC
66	13	him in	him into
56	2	160 or 170	260 or 270



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<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>To Read</u>
68	20	I wanted to be	I was going to be
68	21	Don't give me news calls and	I said to the secretaries, "don't give me news media calls." And I
68	24	and reflected	and it is reflected
72	11	character to do	character for me to do
80	12	confersation	conversation
94	20	Roland, the	Roland Page, the
95	6	the Governor's	the Governor or the Governor
96	9	this	there
96	17	worse	worst
101	12	some roles,	several roles,
102	3	, but that was	, but that is
104	2	Jan Strasner	Jan Strasma
104	24	Dick Keimig	Dick McGaughy
105	5	Peter Floyd came from	other PAO's came to
105	9	Jan Strasner	Jan Strasma
107	18	whole line	whole life
111	23	Strasner	Strasma
113	6	got going,	got going and someone from the <u>White House</u> showed up,
113	7	this, and you	this, and he said, "you
113	11	and screens	and phones
113	15	, and told	, and I was told
113	17	, and set it	, and we set it
113	22	the reporter	a reporter
113	22	if I got to go to one	If I could go into one
113	23	things,	technical things,
113	23	, and had paid attention	and I had to tell him I had paid no attention
114	15	plan,	need,
114	15	will hand in a plan	will have in hand a plan
114	16	, and he	, and it
116	16	, and plunked it	, and plunked down and pushed it
118	6	approve	improve
118	18	can tape his camera down	can buy tape to tape his camera down
119	11	where must	where most
119	12	report was	reporters
119	14	Bennaro	Bernero
119	15	the site could	from the site and could
120	18	couldn't	could

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION:

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1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20055

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THREE MILE ISLAND:

ERIC PEARSON, ESQ.
Deputy Chief Counsel

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K A R L A B R A H A M , having been first
duly sworn by Eric Pearson, Esq., took the
stand and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. PEARSON:

Q Mr. Abraham, have you ever taken a
deposition before, or participated in a deposition?

A No, not that I recall.

Q Let me just simply say that the testimony
you give has the same force and effect as if you
were in a court of law, so try to answer as precisely

2 as possible, and if a question is unclear for any
3 reason, feel free to stop me and ask.

4 A Okay.

5 Q What is your present position with the
6 NRC?

7 A I am the Public Affairs officer assigned to
8 Region I of the NRC.

9 Q How long have you been with the NRC?

10 A Since September 1973.

11 Q Can you characterize for me the different
12 job positions and responsibilities you have had since
13 coming on with the NRC?

14 A I have had the same job all that time.

15 Q What were the responsibilities with
16 that position?

17 A They are basically in two areas: to obtain
18 information on the activities of the NRC and its
19 licensees for the news media; to respond to questions
20 that we have about events or general background infor-
21 mation of an explanatory nature, and to answer questions
22 or requests for information from the general public.

23 I have some other lesser duties which don't
24 face out to the outside world, but which are internal.

25 I provide public affairs staff support to the regional

2 director, answer his questions about what, on the basis
3 of my professional experience, I think may be the
4 consequences of things happening in the world as far
5 as the news media coverage interest; for example, I
6 try to determine those events that are likely to
7 be of news media interest and recommend that we issue
8 a press release on it in order to provide prompt,
9 accurate information when we have it to provide, and
10 I also advise the staff in the region, including the
11 director, on responses to inquiries from the public
12 that may not come to me, but may come to them in terms
13 of language in the response, whether I think it is a
14 person with no special technical education that can
15 understand that language or not, and that probably
16 occupies only a few per cent of my time.

17 I'd say, prior to Three Mile Island, prior to
18 the accident, I spent about 70 to 80 per cent of my
19 time responding to news media inquiries and nearly all
20 the remainder responding to inquiries from the general
21 public. Now my time in responding to inquiries from
22 the general public probably takes up two-third of
23 my time.

24 Q I have a document which you have just
25 given me entitled "BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION," with

2 your name and professional address.

3 Would you describe very quickly what that
4 document is.

5 A It is a brief review of my professional background
6 and educational background, and it was prepared
7 primarily in connection with speeches that I give.
8 Program chairman frequently request some background
9 to use for introductory purposes. It is the only
10 biographical information I have put together.

11 Q Is it accurate to the present?

12 A It was just revised. The date on the bottom
13 says "August 1979."

14 MR. PEARSON: Let us designate that as
15 Deposition Exhibit 1.

16 (Above-described document herein marked
17 Abraham Deposition Exhibit 1 for identification,
18 this date.)

19 Q Do all of the regions have public affairs
20 officers?

21 A Yes, they do.

22 Q When were the positions created within
23 the NRC?

24 A The first position created at the regional level
25 was mine, and was created in the summer of 1973, as far

1
2 as I know. Just prior to my being hired for it, the--

3 Do you want me to go into the background?

4 Q Just very quickly.

5 A The reason was that the regional office, which
6 had been in New York, was close to New York City, which
7 was in the time of the Atomic Energy Commission, and
8 there was an I&E person who had an office in Manhattan.
9 His principal job was speeches and television ap-
10 pearances. It was more educational, and I think one
11 could reasonably say promotional, and at about that
12 time in the 1972-73 time period, the role of the
13 regulatory side of the house was increasing the
14 movement for separation of it from the general
15 manager's side of it, and had already started;
16 people had been moved to Bethesda, while the rest
17 of the AEC stayed in Germantown. It was just a
18 matter of foresight on the part of Joe Fouchard,
19 Director of Informational Services of the AEC, that
20 there ought to be a public affairs officer associated
21 with the region, and my appointment was kind of an
22 experiment to see what the value might be. The
23 motivation was to put the information officer closer
24 to the technical staff so it would be possible for
25 him to respond quickly in rapidly developing situations,

1
2 and try to get more detail and more accurate informa-
3 tion out than would be possible if all information
4 had to be gotten through the telephone.

5 By putting a public affairs officer in this
6 office, which, that summer, was moved from New York
7 to Philadelphia, which is why I took the job because
8 I lived here before that, it was felt that I could
9 sit in on meetings and briefings, have discussions
10 with inspectors who had just gotten information from
11 a licensee, and get a better quality of information
12 on the inspection and enforcement functions, which
13 are the only functions in this building, or were
14 then, except for the state liaison officer, and
15 still are the only functions.

16 Q Do you have any staff that works for you?

17 A No. I have a secretary that I share with the
18 state liaison officer, but I have no support staff
19 in this building.

20 Q Who is your immediate supervisor in this
21 building?

22 A The director, Mr. Grier.

23 Q When did you first become aware that there
24 might be a problem ongoing at Three Mile Island?

25 A When I came to work that morning, which, as

2 best I recall, was one or two minutes before 8:00 a.m.
3 The chief of the Operations, Eldon Brunner, met me at
4 the front door downstairs. I don't know why he
5 was there, but he was opening the door while I was
6 fumbling with my key.

7 "Karl, going to have some meeting at the director's
8 office; been some problem at Three Mile Island."

9 I said, "Fine, I'll dump my briefcase and grab
10 my notebook and be right back," and I went right up,
11 and at a few minutes after eight, the principal staff
12 met there and got what little information we had.

13 Q Who was there?

14 A I believe all the branch chiefs were there,
15 all of those in the office that day, and I think that
16 there had been one or two section chiefs from the
17 Operations Branch and there may have been other
18 persons from the Environmental Section of the Fuel
19 Facilities and Materials Safety Branch.

20 Q Could you name some of these people by
21 name. I am more familiar with the names than the
22 positions.

23 A My recollection of that is poor. There were
24 seven or eight, and only four branch chiefs. There
25 had to be other people. Beside me and the branch

2 chiefs, Mr. Brunner, the section chief. George Smith,
3 I don't recall whether he was there or not. Walter
4 Martin I am not sure about.

5 I think I should interject here, and this is
6 going to be true of a great many questions you ask
7 me, there is a great deal about the first five or
8 six days of the accident that has been wiped out of
9 my mind, and I have only been able to reconstruct part
10 of it by listening to tapes or reading transcripts or
11 reading newspaper clippings, and the reason why a lot
12 of it was scrubbed out was because I intentionally
13 dumped it out as trivial information.

14 There was a constant effort to try not to retain
15 information that I thought was flawed or useless. I
16 tried to acquire and hold information that I thought
17 would be important to the news media and I thought
18 stood a good chance of turning out to be true. I got
19 a lot of information that I knew or soon found out
20 would be false. It is not in my nature to retain
21 false information.

22 Q That is understandable, and if you do
23 give an answer, if you know that is information you
24 acquired later, I would ask you cite that so we have
25 an impression of what you knew at the time and what

2 you knew later.--

3 A I will certainly do that.

4 Q -- to get as accurate as possible.

5 Who was briefing the persons in Mr. Grier's
6 office that morning?

7 A I have a recollection, but it is not a very
8 strong one, that it was Rick Keimig, that he may
9 have gotten a report. I think he was the section
10 chief; either he or the inspector who then was
11 assigned to Three Mile Island as the principal
12 inspector. I think the initial briefing, the initial
13 report from the licensee, came either from them or --
14 well, I am surmising -- it could have come from the
15 duty officer, but that is after the fact. I don't
16 really remember that.

17 Q The principal inspector, is this Havercamp,
18 is that right?

19 A Yes.

20 Q What reaction or what decisions were made
21 at the meeting in response to the information that
22 was being given out?

23 A The strongest impression I have is, number one,
24 the general feeling was that we didn't have much
25 information, and I think that more than anything else

1
2 prompted the almost immediate dispatching of a carload
3 of people. It wasn't very long after I went down
4 from the meeting; the meeting lasted only 15 or 20
5 minutes; 8:30 to 20 to 9:00, I went to my office.
6 My window faces up, and there was a car out there,
7 and people were loading equipment into it; Dr. Gallina
8 was going into the car, and I think it was the emergency
9 station wagon, if I am not mistaken, and Higgins was
10 going into the car, and several other people were going
11 into the car, and I stopped one on the stairs, and
12 said something like, "When are you planning to leave?"
13 They said, "Just as soon as we are loaded, we will
14 up and go."

15 The recollection that I have is that they left
16 well before nine o'clock.

17 Q Did Mr. Grier give an order to go to the
18 site?

19 A Yes, I think so. They wouldn't go -- I
20 think so -- not only that, but there were already
21 preparations under way. They couldn't get that many
22 people together and get them all in one car. It
23 was apparent that there was going to be a second car.
24 As I recall, he said that we have to get people out
25 there and activate the communications center that we

2 have here on the second floor, and try to get more
3 information from the licensee; that is the only
4 impression that I have.

5 Q Did you have a fairly full complement
6 of people here at eight o'clock in the morning?

7 A We never have anything approaching a full
8 complement of people because we have the requirement
9 that inspectors travel a substantial amount of the
10 time inspecting on-site, and on any given day, you
11 would expect to find one-third to one-half of the
12 inspectors or more, traveling. This was in the
13 middle of the week, so that would be particularly
14 true, and some members of middle management, by
15 which I mean section chiefs, were at meetings with
16 licensees and enforcement meetings or other things,
17 people at school, and I have no impression of how
18 many people were there that day.

19 Q When people are reporting here that day,
20 are they expected to report at eight o'clock?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did you receive any specific instructions
23 as a result of the meeting in Mr. Grier's office?

24 A No, I didn't, but then I would not expect to.
25 I am expected to know what to do in these circumstances,

1
2 and the first three things I did was call up the
3 Public Affairs Office in headquarters and give them
4 what little information I had, that there had been
5 some kind of accident at Three Mile Island, problems
6 involving apparently the reactor and some of the
7 pumps and valves and water and so on, and the informa-
8 tion I had at that time was that there was no difficulty
9 at that point with cooling the reactor; there had been
10 no loss of coolant accident, not talking about any
11 huge pipeline break or anything like that, which is
12 the worst kind of accident that we would think about.

13 There wasn't any understanding of what kind of
14 event, and we had no information about any off-site
15 releases, and we were sending people to the site, and
16 that I would keep them informed.

17 I felt already that this, whatever it was going
18 to turn out to be, since they had declared a site
19 emergency -- okay, they had declared a site emergency,
20 and that is not an activity that you could carry on
21 and not have people become aware of outside the plant
22 in a relatively short period of time, and so I expected
23 that the public would become aware of it immediately,
24 and what we needed to do was to get an announcement
25 out fairly quickly telling what we knew as of that time.

2 Q Let me stop you for a moment.

3 A Yes.

4 Q When you contacted headquarters, was it
5 your sense that your transmission of information to
6 them was the first that they had concerning Three
7 Mile Island?

8 A It was the first they had, which the questions
9 they had indicated. When I say "headquarters," I
10 am talking about the Office of Public Affairs. Those
11 are the people I communicate with at headquarters.
12 Those are the ones I work with.

13 Do you understand how the setup works?

14 Q Run through it quickly.

15 A Most of NRC belongs to the Office of Inspection
16 and Enforcement. Nuclear Reactor Regulation, that
17 comes under the Executive Director for Operations,
18 Mr. Gossick.

19 There are a few staff officers that provide
20 support strictly to the Commission. One of those
21 is the director of Public Affairs, Mr. Fouchard,
22 and he has an assistant to the director, Frank Ingram,
23 in his office in Bethesda, who serves as a coordinator
24 or liaison for that office with the five regional
25 public affairs officers, and I am under that

2 organization. I am technically a member of the Office
3 of Public Affairs. I am not a member of Region I.
4 My office is here.

5 Q You are not technically working for
6 Mr. Grier, but technically working for Mr. Fouchard?

7 A I am working for both of them under an agreement
8 reached in writing with the Office of Public Affairs
9 and the Office of I&E, where they provide me certain
10 logistic support, I&E, secretarial support, and I
11 provide them with staff support, provide the director
12 with staff support, but I take my policy directives
13 essentially from the Office of Public Affairs and
14 take my day-to-day guidance from the regional
15 director because it is the branch here I support,
16 but my reporting line is to the Office of Public
17 Affairs in headquarters.

18 Q When you called the Office of Public
19 Affairs at headquarters, with whom did you speak?

20 A Frank Ingram. At that point, I put the paper
21 in the typewriter and started to draft a release.

22 (Continued on Page 16.)

23

24

25

RZ/mf-1

2

Q You indicated there were three things

3

you started to do.

4

A One was to tell Public Affairs; second

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was to try to get staffed up downstairs with

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additional logistic support for the calls that

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I knew would soon be coming in from the news

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media; and third was to start drafting a press

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release.

10

I never got to finish that drafting

11

of the press release. First news media calls, and

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I have this on a reconstruction I kept for a period

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of time on a lot of little pieces of paper that

14

had telephone calls on it. They weren't kept by

15

intent, and disappeared that day, and there were

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just seven or eight pieces lying around, and I

17

was curious when it started that morning. The

18

best I recall, it started between 9:03 and 9:20

19

that the first call came in asking if something

20

was going on at Three Mile Island.

21

Q Did you simply relay the information

22

that you had?

23

A Yes, I told them that there had been an

24

accident and this is what we knew and so on.

25

Then the calls started coming in so

2
1 Abraham

2 heavily that they were overwhelming. Hundreds of
3 calls, many hundreds of calls, and before the day
4 was out we had three other people, technical staff
5 people helping me to handle all these calls, and
6 they did that quite a bit for several weeks.

7 Many calls came into this office
8 because the news media used to call the office.
9 Some time around 10:30, a little earlier,
10 Mr. Fouchard said, "What is the status of the
11 press release?"

12 I said, "I can't write it," and he said,,
13 "Fine, I will do it myself." And I said, "I think
14 that is a better idea," because at that time the
15 Headquarters Communications Center was coming up.
16 They had direct telephone lines from the control
17 room in Three Mile Island into Region and into
18 Headquarters, and all of this information was
19 pouring into Headquarters, and it was a rapidly
20 changing situation, and it was about that time or
21 a little bit later that Mr. Fouchard and I agreed
22 that I really get out to the site.

23 Q Did Mr. Fouchard or others from NRC
24 Headquarters have trouble getting through to you
25 because of the phone lines being jammed?

2 A No, because we had a FTS system, so that
3 was not a problem between here and Headquarters
4 at that time.

5 Q Did Mr. Fouchard direct that you report
6 to the site?

7 A I don't know that it was that formal.

8 Q How was that decision reached?

9 A I don't know how he reached his view, but I
10 can tell you how I reached my view. We were send-
11 ing so many people out there, and there was so
12 much activity going on out there, that whether or
13 not this turned out to be a serious accident, there
14 was going to be a serious media interest, and that
15 a better idea would be to have a Public Affairs
16 officer out there; that was always the plan. We
17 had a plan that in retrospect turned out to be not
18 adequate, but what we did do is get out to the site.

19 I am skipping a couple of days by going
20 into this. I don't know how much you want me to
21 digress.

22 The plan was to go out there to a
23 central point where various people who had informa-
24 tion, to give it out to the news media in the News
25 Center, State, licensee, and the NRC would share

1
2 the responsibility for getting out the information;
3 that turned out, under the circumstances, to be
4 hopeless.

5 Q When was that plan put together?

6 A Oh, years ago. It is part of our Standard
7 Emergency Plan. If you look at the Site Emergency
8 Plans, it talks about an off-site Information Center.
9 Every time a nuclear power plant has had a drill,
10 they have had such a center, and in some cases in
11 order to avoid rumors of real accidents. The
12 Public Affairs people from the utilities have
13 planned the news media part of that center, and
14 the news media have come out taking pictures with
15 ketchup on their arm to get a story, and it has
16 always been thought of as that way.

17 Q When did you have here to go to Three
18 Mile Island?

19 A At 7:30 that night was as early as I could get
20 away. I said from 11:30 -- I am going to get away,
21 but I couldn't leave.

22 Q Did you spend the entire day on the
23 telephone?

24 A Yes, without interruption. The call slips
25 I got -- this is something that still happens.

2 You get so many call slips that you get into a
3 mode that you pick up the phone when it rings.
4 I have three lines, and on the other two lines
5 secretaries take the numbers. When my phone line
6 stops ringing, I take the other calls that never
7 get answered, and start answering them; that was
8 my expectation, that I would take the calls as they
9 came in. If the secretaries -- now two secretaries
10 answering these calls at two different locations.
11 All together they had five lines with calls coming
12 in, and they were taking a lot of call slips and
13 piling them up, and the thought was for a while
14 that I would answer them. Then when I saw what
15 the pile was like, I got help; Jim Younger from
16 the Safeguards, Dick Keimig from Operations and Gary
17 Schneider, who was the technical assistant to the
18 director, and they handled the same volume of calls
19 that I did, and I suppose there were other people
20 in Region I who occasionally got calls also, and
21 none of that was enough for the volume of calls.

22 Q Where were you getting your information
23 on Wednesday with respect to the state of the
24 plant?

25 A I was getting copies at irregular intervals

Abraham

1
2 of the handwritten status reports that were being
3 put out in the Communications Center over here in
4 the conference room. There was a copy that was
5 designated for me, and sometimes I went and picked
6 it up, and sometimes somebody brought it down to
7 me. Most of the information that was in it was
8 useless because it consisted of temperatures
9 and pressures and so on, the meaning of which
10 was no way clear to me. The trends seemed to indicate
11 a little bit about what was going on, but it was
12 essentially purely technical information. There
13 were some radiation measurements, but it wasn't
14 always clear where the measurements had been taken,
15 and then there was some other information that
16 seemed over a period of hours to indicate that there
17 was a substantially larger problem than had been
18 thought, and I think that that impression, and now
19 talking in retrospect because of reading newspaper
20 stories, given by Public Affairs people in Head-
21 quarters, I think about three or four o'clock in
22 the afternoon, Frank Rudergan and Sue Gagner and
23 other people at Headquarters were telling people,
24 giving radio interviews, the transcripts of which
25 I had seen, indicating that this was going to be

1
2 a serious matter and not well understood; that
3 there was no immediate threat to people off-site,
4 but that something very serious was going on on-
5 site.

6 Q In retrospect, do you think Headquarters
7 was getting better information than you were?

8 A They had other sources of information and
9 evaluation capabilities. Keep in mind that the
10 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, or licensing,
11 as we call it, and the technical analysis capability
12 that that office has, because it must review appli-
13 cations for nuclear plans and designs and so on,
14 is all down there. There is no part of that office
15 in this building, and so they were able to take
16 the information that was coming in, and I think
17 look ahead as to what might happen next and also
18 interpret it for Public Affairs, which is something
19 that people in this office really were not very
20 much able to do because they were using that
21 information essentially to plot a technical response
22 to the accident, and it was very much understood by
23 me that that was what they were supposed to be doing,
24 and that turned out for a period of a couple of
25 weeks that the information flows going to people

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2 with very different functions had a clear impact
3 on the availability of different kinds of informa-
4 tion to Public Affairs, and I had some ideas about
5 how that situation could be improved, but that would
6 be a digression now, but clearly it is a major
7 area that we need to work on, which is to have
8 on a large scale the condition that operates here.

9 The situation that we have here, under
10 normal conditions somebody comes up with the fact
11 that some valve is leaking at some plant; that is
12 a fact but then I can go to somebody and say:
13 What is the consequence of this? Is this water
14 likely to be radioactive? Where is this likely
15 to go? How much of it is there? Are they required
16 to report it or not? Have they violated a regulatory
17 requirement?

18 I don't believe you could intrude that
19 information gathering effort by a Public Affairs
20 officer onto the inspection effort and emergency
21 response effort. without, in fact, taking away
22 important response resource, and so there has to be
23 developed some means of taking that path of informa-
24 tion and splitting it off, and an organization to
25 evaluate it and to help Public Affairs translate

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1 essentially technical data into plain English
2 sentences, and that was the problem that we had
3 even days later at Three Mile Island until this
4 was assigned to the Public Affairs Group to two
5 technical people who have a particular gift for
6 speaking plain English, Bob Banero and Tom
7 Elsasser from Headquarters. They were able to get
8 technical information from our side and Trailer
9 City and Camden and so on, and fit the information
10 into their more substantial, very much more sub-
11 stantial knowledge of the behavior of this reactor,
12 and then to anticipate, or in response to our
13 questions, phrase the information in such a way at
14 it would really be useful to a reporter.

16 Q When did you arrive at Three Mile
17 Island?

18 A You mean, the site itself?

19 Q The site itself.

20 A I drove out to Harrisburg -- to give you
21 a short answer, I got to the site about 11:00-11:30.

22 Q Okay.

23 A I drove out to Harrisburg at 7:30; at 9:30 I
24 was at the last service area just before Harrisburg,
25 818. I had my car radio, and realized that

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2 Dr. Gallina and the Governor were having a press
3 conference. I turned the set on to listen; that
4 was my first overview of what had happened that
5 day and what was going on in the Public Affairs
6 sense and political sense, and what kind of problems ;
7 the Governor was confronting at that moment, and
8 so on.

9
10 Then I went to a hotel and dropped off
11 my bags down in Harrisburg itself, and then drove
12 out to the site, and went to the Observation Center,
13 which was the designated off-site emergency assembly
14 point.

15 Q Did you go there because you were
16 expected to report in, or did you go out there out
17 of personal interest?

18 A I went out there to see what was going on;
19 to see what was going on in terms of the news media
20 out there. There were very few out there. I don't
21 recall anybody stopping me from the news media.

22 I went into the center itself, and
23 people were wearing yellow slickers, one desk and
24 three telephones and people standing in line to
25 use the telephones, and I can't live without com-
munications and that was absolutely useless, so I

1
2 just left.

3 Q Did you speak to anybody while you
4 were there?

5 A I have a vague recollection of talking to one
6 of our own guys who was rushing past carrying some
7 of these little pocket dosimeters, these little
8 things that look like fountain pens that you look
9 into, and saying, "You know something about this?
10 Is this it?"

11 And he saying, "This is it."

12 I said, "Well, how is everything?"

13 And he said, "Not too bad," and it was
14 just a very brief snatch of a very generalized
15 conversation. I don't even remember right now if
16 I asked him if you had any serious off-site releases
17 or not. I may have.

18 Q What was the situation like in the
19 center?

20 A The center was being used as a staging area
21 for people coming on-site and off-site; so many of
22 them inundating everything I couldn't see any of
23 our people who were there on the Island. There were
24 no trailers there yet.. I am not sure. I don't
25 know if our mobile laboratory had arrived at that

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2 hour or not, but it was dark. I think the weather --
3 I don't know what the weather was like. I don't
4 remember the weather, but I don't recall seeing
5 the mobile laboratory. It could have been parked in
6 the parking lot, but it was dark -- didn't have
7 the lights and everything up, as I recall they had
8 later.

9 Q When you left, what did you do?

10 A Well, I didn't leave without using the phone.
11 I stood in line briefly and I made one call, and
12 I don't remember whether I called the Regional Office
13 or whether I called the Public Affairs Officer at
14 Headquarters, but I told somebody, "There are no
15 phones here, no tables, no chairs. You can't do
16 anything here with the news media, and I might
17 as well go back and go to sleep and get up early
18 in the morning and see what I can do," and whoever
19 I talked to said, "Okay," and that was about it.

20 Q So that is what you did?

21 A Right; that was done on the basis that I knew
22 before I left here at 7:30 -- mid-to late afternoon,
23 it was very obvious that news media were appearing
24 at the Public Affairs Office in Headquarters and
25 a steady flow of information was coming out of

2 there, and I was playing catch-up with it, having
3 been on the road for hours, and being in a place
4 where I couldn't easily intercept communications,
5 so I thought what I would do the next day -- there
6 is obviously never going to be a combined news center,
7 as talked about in the Emergency Plan. Maybe I
8 ought to find out if there is such a thing anywhere;
9 that is what I did. I got a good night's sleep and
10 got up early the next morning and went out to the
11 site again.

12 Q When did you arrive at the site?

13 A Some time between 7:00 and 8:00 o'clock in
14 the morning, as I recall, and there wasn't much
15 difference.

16 Q Did you again go to the Center?

17 A I went into the building, and it was not very
18 much different. There were coffee cups now.

19 Q Were they still wearing the slickers?

20 A I didn't know at the time that those were
21 the plastic decontamination jackets that everybody
22 was wearing.

23 Q Nobody gave you one when you were
24 there?

25 A No, as a matter of fact, they didn't. I

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2 didn't pick one up until about four weeks after
3 the accident, and so I said, "This seems no better
4 today than last night." I do think at that time
5 I had a perception, and this is very vague, but that
6 the mobile van was there and people working in it
7 and starting to put out bottles and things around,
8 samples, and all that kind of stuff.

9 Q Did you determine that your remaining
10 there would be of no use?

11 A No. There is nothing I could do there. I
12 had no place, I had no communications, I couldn't
13 get in touch with anybody except the people I
14 could intercept walking back and forth there, yet
15 I knew that a lot of information had to be flowing
16 over from the site and being evaluated. I had
17 the impression that people out there had fragments
18 of information. They were all doing their job,
19 and it was not their job to put together a comprehen-
20 sive picture of what was going on, but that is what
21 I needed.

22 (Continued on the next page.)
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2 Q Under the pre-existing plan that you
3 mentioned, would you have expected that there would
4 have been a place for you in some communications
5 center at the center?

6 A I think there would have been a place. I didn't
7 expect a communications -- the communications problems
8 were things I anticipated. I just knew that is always
9 going to be the problem, but I at least thought there
10 would be a building and a table, and I could call the
11 phone company and have a phone put in, but I didn't
12 have that.

13 I said, maybe I am in the wrong place. I went
14 downtown to the Office of the Bureau of Radiation
15 Protection, Tom Gerusky's office, and I guess I
16 got there between 9:00 and 10:00.

17 Q Why did you go there?

18 A Because that is our state contact. I went in
19 and said, "Tom, what is going on?" and he gave me a
20 little rundown in very general terms.

21 "We have got a guy in the control room. Every-
22 thing seems to be under control. We have some releases,
23 but nothing really serious."

24 This is Thursday morning, okay, and I said,
25 "Where, if anywhere, is there any kind of a combined

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2 news center?"

3 He said, "Let me know. I don't know. Let me
4 call," and he called over to Paul Critchlow's office,
5 and Critchlow, as I gather, not hearing the other
6 end of the conversation, said, "I am getting a lot
7 of calls here."

8 He said, "Why don't you go over to Critchlow's."

9 I went across the street to the Governor's
10 press secretary, and he was there, and he said, "I am
11 getting a lot of calls about things we don't know
12 anything about and you probably do. Why don't you
13 take some of these calls."

14 I had been in the building a few months earlier
15 for a hearing of an Appeal Board, an oral argument
16 on the Three Mile Island aircraft protection issue,
17 which is under appeal, and we used the caucus room
18 down on the ground floor, so I knew that the state
19 press gallery was right up on the mezzanine of the
20 Capitol. What that means is that you not only have
21 a lot of newspaper and television reporters, but
22 their communications are permanently wired; they
23 have radio things; they have a studio up at the top
24 of the Capitol for the Governor's press releases,
25 have AP and UPI, and if I wanted to put out a teletype

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2 to the whole world, I could.

3 Q You are going from famine to feast?

4 A I said, if I am going to be somewhere, why
5 shouldn't I be here? I am not trying to gather
6 technical information for the NRC. I am trying to
7 maintain contact, and contact with the news media.
8 If I let them know I am there, they will bring it
9 to me. If I want to find out what the state is
10 doing in emergency planning, the state police have
11 a very big response, and at that time, almost the
12 sole part, what better place to be than one floor
13 above where the Governor is going to be making the
14 decisions.

15 There were a lot of telephone lines there.
16 It didn't seem to be that busy, although calls were
17 coming in at a brisk rate, so I said to Critchlow,
18 "What can you do for me?"

19 "I tell you what we are going to do. We have
20 a room here where we keep newspaper clippings. There
21 is an old call director with one of these boxes with
22 maybe 12 lines. I will give you two lines, and I
23 will have the secretaries take the lines and take
24 the calls and let you know if it is something you
25 can handle," and I took my coat off and sat down,

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3.4 2 and from about, I guess it was 10:30, a quarter to
3 11:00 in the morning until the wee hours of the next
4 morning, I sat and talked on the telephone, leaving
5 it essentially to the press secretary's staff to
6 decide whether the nature of an inquiry was something
7 I would respond to or not.

8 A great many people called up and said they
9 are somebody from the NRC, "What did I tell them,
10 where did I get the information?"

11 I made calls to my own office, which at that
12 time was occupied by Jan Strassner from Region III,
13 and Jan Strassmer was getting all these and passing
14 down information.

15 If I had some false rumor, I would call directly
16 in the communications center and talk to George Smith
17 or Grier or whoever was there. I don't even remember
18 who they all were. They were all familiar names, but
19 I made no special note of this, and gradually built
20 up some information, the nature of which I hardly
21 remember, and I did that all day Thursday and all
22 day Friday and almost all day Saturday.

23 Q Did you attend the Governor's press
24 conference on Thursday night?

25 A Yes, I think I did go up to the television

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2 studio for that one on Thursday night.

3 Q Were you involved with briefing the
4 Governor prior to the press conference or briefing
5 the Lieutenant Governor prior to the press conference?

6 A I did attend a meeting in the Governor's Office,
7 Let's see. It couldn't have been Wednesday night
8 because I missed that one. It had to have been
9 Thursday night's meeting in the Governor's Office;
10 Gallina and Higgins were there, Gerusky was there,
11 I was there, and there was a discussion of what kind
12 of things Higgins and Gallina were going to talk
13 about because the Governor was going to make some
14 introductory remarks, and then I think he was going
15 to say Higgins and Gallina would answer questions
16 from the news media, and we talked about what kind
17 of things were going on.

18 Q Do you remember any questions that the
19 Governor or the Lieutenant Governor might have asked
20 in response to the briefing they were getting?

21 A No, I honestly don't. I really only remember
22 one thing that came at the very end of the briefing,
23 and I guess -- my operating theory is to prepare for
24 the worst and hope for the best, and I felt the
25 interpretation that was being made by the state people

2 of the information they were given was a little bit
3 more -- I don't want to use the word "euphoric,"
4 that is not the right word -- but I had a feeling
5 that they were concerned very much about the decisions
6 that they had to make at that moment, and that they
7 didn't have in mind the possibility that the situation
8 might change and get really a lot worse, and so I said,
9 "I think you need to talk about the radiation problem
10 because you have a lot of people out there with a lot of
11 concerns, and we are getting questions on the phone."

12 I had questions not just from the news media
13 but from citizens also, Thursday, and we were getting
14 questions about how dangerous it is, and people
15 talking about the low-level effect of radiation,
16 people who have read things like the Beer Report,
17 or read stories about it in the newspapers, and
18 people who have followed the controversy that
19 Dr. Sterngrass is involved in, and after all, this
20 is Pennsylvania, and Harrisburg is not that far from
21 Pittsburgh. I think you should expect the thoughts
22 going through people's minds: "If I am pregnant,
23 is my baby going to be born deformed? If I get a
24 radiation exposure, is it going to be a cancer
25 problem," and so on.

2 There was a feeling there that I was looking
3 at the thing much too gloomily. I said, "Let's not
4 get started on that. I can understand why that
5 happened," but that is the only part of that whole
6 meeting I really remember. The only reason I really
7 remember it is I thought about it the next day when
8 the Governor had to make decisions along the lines
9 of protecting women, pregnant women and --

10 Q You said this just to the Governor?

11 A It is not just a comment that --

12 Q The Governor was among the people there,
13 is that accurate?

14 A Yes.

15 Q How about the Lieutenant Governor, was
16 he there, too?

17 A People were going in and out. I don't know
18 whether he was there at that moment or not.

19 Q Was the exchange of information at that
20 meeting a frank one, candid in every way? What
21 kind of impression did you have in that regard?

22 A Well, I think it was frank and candid up to
23 a point. I think there was no intent that I could see
24 to hold back, but I think that you have to look at
25 the communications, personal communications practices

2 of the people involved, people who live in a world
3 of technical reports, and trying to get factual
4 information straight, and who are suddenly thrust
5 into a role where they are giving advice to somebody
6 who has to take a very non-technical, a very human,
7 and certainly decisions with political -- potentially
8 political consequences, you know.

9 I think that everybody was trying very hard
10 to do something that they had never had to do before,
11 and I don't think they did badly at all, in fact. I
12 was just looking at one thing that really struck me.
13 That day, that Thursday, there is a newspaper clipping
14 here in which Gallina was asked by a reporter -- I
15 don't think -- it might have been at the press
16 conference or right after the press conference, but
17 it was about how bad the plant was, and he actually
18 made the statement that it is going to take a long
19 time to clean up the contamination.

20 On the day after the accident, for him to have
21 that awareness and to communicate it to a reporter,
22 I think says a lot about the candor, and I think
23 he did very well, and I think that in retrospect,
24 the next day and the day after, the Governor would
25 very much have looked to more insight into predictions

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2 of what might come, but I don't honestly think that
3 we were in any position to give it. Nothing I know
4 indicates that we could have given it except as a
5 speculation, and that is the last thing in the world
6 he wanted.

7 It was very clear, when I tried to speculate
8 on how the public might react to a serious problem,
9 I think the reason why they said, "Let's not get
10 into that," it was because it was to them a specu-
11 lation unfounded by any technical knowledge. I hadn't
12 made any measurements out at the site; I had no direct
13 factual contribution I was trying to make, nor was I
14 trying to make that. I was trying to alert them to
15 the fact that public misunderstanding in an area
16 that is little understood to begin with, the potential
17 for that is enormous. They ought to keep that in
18 mind when they pass information.

19 It ought to be clear, when they talk about the
20 radiation thing, that there are a lot of pregnant
21 women out there. I talked to two last night, and
22 between the two of them, it lasted over an hour, and
23 their concerns in this kind of a case are special.
24 It is natural for people to focus on a problem, am I
25 going to have to evacuate 20 or 30 or 50 thousand

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2 people -- to concentrate on the technical facts to
3 make that kind of decision, and I wanted to try to
4 force them to think about what the individual
5 reactions were. A lot of people were getting up
6 and leaving. Reporters were calling in saying people
7 were leaving Middletown like crazy.

8 I kept saying the highest reading I am getting
9 is 15-20-25 MR; Friday morning, that was the numbers.

10 Q Did you, in the meeting with the Governor
11 and Lieutenant Governor on Thursday night, hear of a
12 release that would approximate or that would be
13 measured at about 3,000 millirem?

14 A No, no. I know what you are talking about.
15 I didn't see that number until I went down to
16 Washington last week -- was it last week or the week
17 before -- for the release of the report, and the
18 first time I looked at it, I didn't read the date
19 correctly, and then we even looked at it -- I think
20 I and a lot of other people -- I never was aware of
21 it until a few days ago.

22 Q Even the news media announced that as a
23 new finding that they were unaware of, too.

24 A That is just an indicator of the perishability
25 of information which somebody in my background in the

2 newspaper business takes as a matter of fact, which
3 people, used to putting everything down on paper and
4 documenting everything normal'y, didn't anticipate
5 at all.

6 Q Was there any discussion with the Governor,
7 to your recollection, concerning what steps might
8 be taken in the event that the state of the reactor
9 would deteriorate?

10 A Well, the part about the state of the reactor
11 deteriorating, I don't recall it from that viewpo' .
12 I do have a vague recollection that there was some
13 discussion about the fact that the state does have an
14 Office of Emergency Management, and there is an
15 evacuation plan, and that we do have something going
16 if we have to move a lot of people, and I got the
17 impression that there was some kind of state planning
18 in existence, and it was recognized that if things --
19 if it became necessary, if the course of the
20 accident turned that way, that they would be capable
21 of doing more than they were doing at that point on
22 Thursday night, and I think that the Governor went
23 out at the press conference, and I could be
24 misremembering it, but I think he was asked that
25 question just to that point by a reporter, and said

2 something to the effect that we are still evaluating,
3 continuously evaluating what is going on, and we
4 would evacuate people if we needed to, but we don't
5 see the need at this time, or something to that
6 effect. I think that was said at the press conference.

7 Q Did anything occur between the briefing
8 of the Governor and the press conference which would
9 be noteworthy?

10 A I don't remember how much time elapsed between
11 them. We are talking about Thursday night now?

12 Q That is correct.

13 A I don't even remember.

14 Q What happened after the press conference?

15 A Held the press conference, and always in this
16 case, people grab people in the corridor and talked
17 to Higgins and Gallina. I also took the information
18 that came out of the press conference; reporters ask
19 very good questions. They dragged out in response
20 to their questions a fair amount of information
21 from Higgins and Gallina that provided me with
22 answers to those same questions that were going to
23 be asked by other reporters later on, so I was taking
24 notes. I can't find them. I was writing on all
25 kinds of stuff, and a lot of that stuff just got

2 thrown out when it was out of date, but I did get
3 a lot of stuff out of the press conference itself.

4 The thing I got mostly out of the press con-
5 ference was the fact that -- I don't know whether he
6 was asked directly or whether it was just that he
7 didn't say it, but there was no indication that
8 Gallina or anybody else was telling the Governor,
9 you'd better start moving people out right now, and
10 that was the question that I was asked most often
11 by reporters and by the general public, "should we
12 evacuate?" and I kept saying that I haven't heard any-
13 body say that anybody should be evacuating, and I
14 haven't gotten any numbers of radiation measurements
15 that would, to my own knowledge, lead me to think
16 you had to evacuate.

17 Q On Thursday afternoon, what information
18 did you have concerning the dumping of waste water?

19 A A very unhappy one.

20 Q Would you explain that.

21 A That is a lengthy thing; that is something I
22 remember in fair detail.

23 Sometime around 5:30, 6 o'clock, I went into
24 this in a lot of detail with Rubin and Sandman;
25 they were very interested in this.

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MS. MOE; They were interviewers for the President's Commission, right?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

A (Continuing.) I guess it all started around 5:30 or 6 o'clock; the time that this started, I think, could be reconstructed from the transcripts and tapes because I made some telephone calls about it, but Dave Milne, who was the Public Information officer for the Department of Environmental Resources, came in with the draft of a press release, and came in to Critchlow, and Critchlow called me into his office, and I got the strong impression that this was the first that Critchlow had heard about this, that this thing was even contemplated, or that there had been one earlier in the day, and it had been stopped.

Q About what time was this?

A 5:30, 6 o'clock, you know; maybe it was later. I don't know. It was late in the afternoon.

Q Okay.

A And I asked a lot of questions just to find out what was going on, and it gradually developed that they had actually dumped about, and the number that was used was 40,000 gallons; I don't think that was accurate, but that was the number that was used,

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and I was trying to find out what kind of water this was, and I was told, you know, industrial waste water, and that the state has to decide whether or not to let them dump it.

(Continued on Page 44.)

Q From whom were you trying to find this information?

A From Milne and Critchlow, and apparently there is a waste discharge permit, and this involves EPA and the state DER, and because it is industrial waste water, it has other things in it; the State is supposed to give permission in that it also has some radioactivity in it, and at the time it was clear to me that the State in fact had to decide whether or not to discharge this water. The number that was mentioned was 400,000 gallons.

Q When you first heard of it, was the question whether they could dump it or was the dump already under way?

A The dump had started and stopped, and my understanding is that it had been stopped by the State.

Q Where did you get that understanding?

A I got that understanding from Milne; then later on, I got the impression it really hadn't been stopped by the State but had been stopped by the NRC, and it was to remain a confusing point about who had the authority to start or stop all through the night, right through the very end,

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2 which was around midnight or later.

3 Q From whom did you get the impression
4 that the NRC had stopped it?

5 A I don't even remember that now, Critchlow, who
6 has got a very strong newspaper background, spent
7 some years as a reporter for the PHILADELPHIA
8 INQUIRER, and I both said, "400,000 gallons, that
9 is a lead line for every paper in the country.
10 How long has this been going on?"

11 Then it turned out that the State
12 Department of Environmental Resources people had
13 known about this since 10:30 in the morning, about
14 the starting and stopping of it.

15 I should interject that there are now
16 today documents as to these times, and the documents
17 are really quite different. What I am trying to
18 tell you is what I remember having known at the
19 time. Okay?

20 Q Right.

21 A And I said, "You got to issue a press
22 release that you are going to dump it," and
23 Critchlow said, "Well, you know, do you have to
24 dump it?" And I said, "I don't know whether you
25 have to dump it or not. What is the problem?"

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2 "Well, the Governor is on a radio or
3 television show tonight and got another one
4 tomorrow morning, and if we issue the press
5 release everybody is going to ask him about it,
6 and he doesn't even know about any of this."
7 So I said, "Well, you know, if the State stopped
8 the discharge earlier in the day, I guess the
9 State could stop it again. I don't know what
10 the rules are."

11 "Milne, you are with the DER. What
12 are the rules?" He sort of thinks you could
13 stop. "Talk to the Governor and tell him what is
14 going on to begin with, and take the draft of
15 the press release, and call up my people in
16 Washington to see what they think of it," and
17 you will find the transcript where we go word
18 by word over the press release and make changes,
19 and sometimes there were statements in the draft
20 that were technically just out and out wrong, and
21 at other times I felt our people in Washington
22 were trying to say something in a way that would
23 have been misunderstood, and argued about what
24 kind of wording it should be.

25 Q With whom were you speaking?

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2 A Mr. Fouchard, and with technical people
3 whose voices I didn't know. Most of the
4 people in Washington I hardly ever talked to on
5 the telephone. Denton's voice and other people's
6 voices, they didn't become familiar. I probably
7 talked to Stello once or twice, and Vollmer, I
8 didn't even know who Vollmer was, but there were
9 some voices there, you know, who were -- we got
10 on a speaker box there, and I went through line by
11 line, and scribbled in, and since Milne was the
12 author of this, and he was getting it back, and
13 it looked like the heavy hand of a copy editor
14 had gone through it. It was disconcerting.
15 This is what we recommend, but it is your press
16 release.

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18 They did in fact accept some of our
19 recommendations and rejected others, and what
20 eventually came out was an amalgam, and some of the
21 technical things were just out and out wrong on it.

22 Q How long did the process take to get
23 out the press release?

24 A It took until after midnight. The press release
25 wasn't the only problem. The problem that was going
on, and this is the first time I gradually metamorphized

Abraham

out of my role as a Public Affairs and liason person with the State.

The question was whether the Governor could stop it or not, and he would periodically call Critchlow, and it gradually, very gradually became apparent as the evening got later, that the Governor really had no choice, until finally, and I am guessing, the time was like 10:00 or 10:30 at night that Critchlow accepted the fact that the Governor had no choice, and was waiting for him to get off so he was going to tell him that I said, you've got to tell him I am now told by my people in Washington that, and I think in this case I remember it was Stello who told me -- okay -- the darn thing is going to overflow if we don't discharge. Those tanks are going to overflow and going to go down the floor drains and going to have a mess, and who knows what is going to go into the river.

I said, if that is the case, you've got to tell the Governor that he doesn't really have a choice because the political consequences for leaving him to think that he could stop it or not stop it, those are pretty severe. Here

1
2 a new Governor in for a few months, and who would
3 expect that he would be in this situation.

4 Q So there was no dump ongoing, and the
5 question of can we or can't we --

6 A There was no dump ongoing. I didn't pay
7 attention to the original starting and stopping of
8 the dump, the 40,000 gallons; that is the other
9 part of the story. A reporter for the NEW YORK
10 TIMES by the name of Richard Lyons had come to
11 me late afternoon before I knew any of this and
12 said there is a rumor floating around that there
13 is a lot of water in the containment and they
14 are just going to dump it into the river, hundreds
15 of thousands of gallons, and I said, I don't believe
16 it. The water has to be too radioactive, and nobody
17 is going to dump it into the river. I haven't heard
18 that from anybody, but I will check it out.

19 I called up somebody, "Where are these
20 hundreds of thousands of gallons in containment?
21 Are you thinking of dumping this in the river
22 for some reason?" There must be a tape recording
23 of it somewhere, that the response was horror,
24 no, nobody was going to dump that because I had
25 not yet heard the term industrial waste water

Abraham

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1 at that hour of the day. I didn't even know what
2 it was, and then Richard Lyons said, okay, and
3 went off. Then after I got this draft of the
4 press release and realized what was going on, I
5 said, there is Dick Lyons and I told him there
6 wasn't going to be any dumping, and it wouldn't
7 make any difference what 400,000 gallons we are
8 going to talk about. I have every reason to believe
9 that, you know, that you are not going to dump that
10 water, and so I said to the secretaries in Critchlow's
11 office, "I really would like to get hold of Dick
12 Lyons. You have no idea where he might be?"

14 They said, "Sure, we think he is eating
15 over at the Italian restaurant -- " I will remember
16 the name later. The most famous one which is a
17 couple of blocks from the Capitol. "Just on the
18 chance he is there, call over there and see if
19 you get him on the page," and sure enough on the
20 page comes Dick -Lyons, and I said, "Dick, I
21 found out they are dumping some water, and dumped
22 about 40,000 gallons, and the thing has stopped.
23 I didn't want you to think that I was misleading
24 you."

25 "I don't care. What is this 40,000

BENJAMIN REPORTING SERVICE

Abraham

gallons? That is not reactor containment water,
is it?"

"No, something they called industrial
waste water."

"Okay," and he went back to whatever
he was doing, and I went back to whatever I was
doing, and then gradually around 10:00 o'clock or
so on it got to be very obvious that the story
was changing drastically, and the Governor had
no choice, Critchlow was teed off, and I was
furious about the fact that this whole thing had
changed in this way, and suddenly got to the point
where I very arbitrarily said, "Well, if you are
going to dump water, you can't dump the water and
not let the Governor know about it when he is on
a radio or television show and got another one
coming up tomorrow," and I talked to somebody in
Washington, and you will find the transcript that
says, "You've got to wait until the Governor knows
what is going on," and Stello or somebody said,
"Okay, we will hold up until we hear from you, but
we can't hold up forever."

Finally, Critchlow getting the Governor
the press release -- the version being distributed,

1
 2 and saying to the Governor, here is the situation,
 3 and telling the Governor that in fact he doesn't
 4 have any choice, that the damn thing is going to
 5 overflow, and I am on a phone with people in
 6 Washington, and they have got a line to the control
 7 room and saying, "I have got an open line down
 8 here, and as soon as you tell me that it is okay
 9 to start dumping the water, I am going to call
 10 the control room." And he calls and says, "Okay,
 11 start. The Governor knows he can't do anything;
 12 about it anyway except to cause a worse situation,
 13 so it is really not in my hands."

14 Q Who called the control room and said
 15 go ahead?

16 A Somebody down at the Headquarters said
 17 they had an open line to the control room. I
 18 am guessing it was Stello. I didn't know the
 19 voices.

20 There was another question going on,
 21 and that was largely of my making. This problem
 22 was largely of my making, and also had to be
 23 dealt with. I am in Region I and know about the
 24 Beaver Valley and the discharge from Beaver Valley
 25 and a whole lot of mayors down river whose communities

1
2 take their drinking water, who got very upset, and
3 were given the choide of closing the water intakes.
4 Here we have had a serious accident, and said to
5 Milne, as the evening wore on, "I want assurances
6 that you are going to notify the mayors downstream
7 that the release is going on, is going to be
8 started, and that you give them enough time to
9 decide whether or not they want to call up their
10 water treatment plant that is taking the water out
11 of the river, and check the intakes. This is
12 something they can easily do. And when they have
13 chemical spills and other things, they know how
14 to do this."

15
16 And he said, "Yes, we will. We are
17 going to be in touch with them and going to notify
18 them." And I believe they did. I have every
19 reason to believe they actually did that within
20 a half hour or so that they issued the press release.

21 Q Was it your sense that this release
22 of 400,000 gallons of water, or whatever would
23 be untreated would be just a raw --

24 A I was assured that it was low level radio-
25 active, was from showers and laundries and
Unit 1 fuel outage, and well within the release

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2 limits of NRC; no technical problems.

3 The only problem was the number, 400,000,
4 in the headline. It was never in my perception
5 a health problem.

6 Q Did you perceive that it could have
7 caused difficulties for any of the downstream
8 public water supplies?

9 A Only political difficulties. How does the
10 mayor explain that somebody sent it his way and
11 he didn't know, and the local news media would
12 call up, "Were you ever informed?" Every time
13 a licensee has an event today, and something
14 happened, the reporter asked, "Did the company
15 inform you?" Reporting and failure to report has
16 gotten to be a real big thing, not only in our
17 business, but in lots of other government agencies,
18 and the politicians and other public people now
19 know that they are going to be asked, were they
20 informed, and they like to be in the position of
21 saying, "Yes, I know all about it, and we reviewed
22 it, and this is what we are going to do," and to
23 be insensitive to that need, I think is just to
24 be clumsy, and I think that that need was met and
25 I was assured by Milne that they had done that, and

2 I think they did.

3 Q You heard nothing more of that whole
4 question since Thursday?

5 A The only thing I heard is the aftermath of
6 the NEW YORK TIMES' reporter's displeasure with
7 the fact that he was done out of a big story,
8 because by the time the press release was issued,
9 his last deadline -- not really his last, but the
10 main deadline had passed and everybody else had
11 the story, and he thought he had an inside track
12 on it, and he said some words -- I have known this
13 guy since the space shot for 15 years, and he said,
14 "I am never going to talk to you again," and so
15 on and so forth. "I am never going to trust you
16 again, I am never going to trust the NRC again,"
17 and all that kind of stuff.

18 Now that the investigations have been
19 done and the things didn't happen in the times and
20 quantities under the situations we thought at the
21 time, I would have misled him just as much as if
22 I had told him in the middle of the evening that
23 they were going to discharge 400,000 gallons,
24 because in fact, it never happend. They did dis-
25 charge a lot of water, but no where near that,

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2 160 or 170 over a period of three days. I didn't
3 understand even at the end of that night where the
4 hell this water was from that they were talking
5 about, although I do understand now, but it was
6 an acrimonious experience, and that is why the
7 details are fixed in my mind.

8 Q Were there any other events that
9 occurred on Thursday that are worthy of note?

10 A Nothing that I can remember.

11 Q When did you finish working on Thursday?

12 A The press conference was kind of late, and I
13 then went back down to the office. This all
14 blended together. There was the press conference
15 that took a little chunk of time -- I don't remember
16 exactly. It is sort of my recollection that the
17 press release went about 12:15 and 12:30 a.m. and
18 about a quarter to 1:00, Lyons showed up smoking
19 from every pore, and I probably left there -- I
20 know when I left there. I left there and went
21 back to the garage where I parked my car and found
22 the garage was locked, and I had to walk back to
23 the hotel from the garage, at 1:00 or 2:00 o'clock,
24 whenever that municipal parking garage closes, but
25 I couldn't get my car. All my stuff was in the

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2 car there. I had to go to the hotel room and had
3 to back the next morning after 6:00 a.m. After
4 that, I didn't park in the garage, but left it
5 in the hotel, but it was in the early hours of
6 the morning.

7 Q We can take a five-minute break or --

8 A Yes.

9 (Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

10 (Continued on the following page.)

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RZ:5:1c

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Q When we took our recess, we had finished discussing the events of Thursday, the 29th.

3

4 A Right.

5

Q Let us move on, then, to Friday morning of the 30th. What was your first involvement that day?

6

7 A I think I probably got to Critchlow's office around 7:30 or so, and for the first hour or so, the few calls that came in -- there was one thing I had not pointed out.

8

9 I am very conscious of my communications on the telephones in Critchlow's office, but it is a fact that a lot of people came in there to talk to me. First of all, there was a state press gallery there, and in between the press conferences and other things, lots of reporters from the radio and television stations, radio people, came in, did radio interviews, reporters working on background would ask, "Explain to me what a pressurizer is," and that kind of stuff, which is mostly what I did. I spent a lot more time giving out background information than I did hard news because I didn't have very much of it; that was the plain hard fact. I did that for the first hour on Friday morning and then began gradually to be aware that as I tried to call either Philadelphia

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2 or Washington, I was beginning to get more and more
3 busy signals, not the number I was calling, but on
4 the lines.

5

Q What did that mean to you?

6

A The phone system was being saturated. The
7 situation turned out to be a kind of interesting
8 one, and I started to go into this with Rubin and
9 with Sandman, and I didn't describe it very well.

10

It was, I think, an attempt on Critchlow's
11 part to save some money, knowing I was going to be
12 returning a lot of long-distance calls from all
13 over the country, that he gave me a couple of WATS
14 lines, and I discovered that I could get to places
15 through the WATS line that I couldn't get to on the
16 normal line, and so then I gradually realized, some-
17 time between 8:00 and 9:00 a .

18

The other thing that I gradually became aware
19 of, because Critchlow called it to my attention, was
20 that he was getting information of a very high
21 release at the site, and I hadn't heard anything
22 about that, and I was getting numbers, including
23 the number of 1200 millirem, as a measurement
24 off-site, which I simply couldn't believe.

25

Q Where were you getting those numbers?

2 A From Critchlow. In fact, let me point out a
3 couple of things here that is very important. When
4 Sandman and Rubin were here toward the end of their
5 eight-hour interview, they threw at me a piece of
6 transcript, portions of a couple of transcripts, and
7 they asked me where I got some information that I
8 was obviously reporting to Washington, and I looked
9 at it in silence for a long time because I didn't
10 have any recollection of the conversation at all,
11 but more than that, and this was a conversation at
12 9:09 a.m. on Friday. I couldn't in my wildest dreams
13 ever remember saying such a thing.

14 What I have here is Channel 7 of the master
15 tapes of the Washington Communications Center, and
16 I listened to these tapes again three weeks ago, two
17 weeks ago. When I was in Washington, I went over one
18 night to listen to them, and the time that I have
19 written on them of 9:09 a.m. comes from the time
20 that is automatically recorded on the tapes and
21 displayed on the digital clock that goes as you listen
22 to the --

23 MS. MOE: 9:09?

24 THE WITNESS: Yes, on Friday.

25 Q May I have a quick review of that before

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you --

A (Handing.) By all means. What you see in typewriting is how it was handed to me, and what you see in red ink is really on the tape. There are two or three comparable transcripts that will make this point very well.

MR. PEARSON: Off the record.

(Discussion held off the record.)

MR. PEARSON: Back on the record.

A On the second page of this three-page segment, which has a number 03-259-CH7-5-PD-2 at the top, I was asked by, I think it was Dave Rubin, as I am myself repeating a number, 1200 millirems per hour, and I am telling somebody at headquarters that number, "Where did I get that from?" and I said, "I don't have any idea where I got that from." And I read the transcript, and there was nothing in the transcript that clarified that question, and we left the question up in the air, but I now know, having listened to the tape, that I said at the time that the Governor's -- and you will see in the transcript that the line is broken off there on this page that I have identified. "The Governor's press secretary tore in here and said" -- it was the Governor's press secretary who gave me the

2 information that he was getting, that the Governor
3 was getting, and Civil Defense people talking about,
4 and you see it says right here the measurements being
5 reported by Civil Defense are 1200 MR per hour. This
6 is what the Governor was getting, and I was passing
7 it on to, I think it was Fouchard, or somebody at
8 headquarters, and that is where I got all this was
9 from Critchlow. He had come upstairs and said, "We
10 are getting these reports and so on," and I was
11 passing this on to headquarters, to make them, number
12 one, aware that this was going on, that the Civil
13 Defense people were calling the Governor and to
14 also make them aware, as Critchlow was aware, that
15 a number of 1200 MR per hour off-site has got to
16 be a hell of a serious problem.

17 At the time that this discussion was going on
18 and implied in it was the fact that both headquarters
19 and I knew, because I called at some point earlier
20 out to the trailers. By that time I had a number
21 for a trailer, and what I was being told was 25-30
22 MRs were the highest number, and suddenly comes 1200.

23 Q Let me interrupt you for a moment.

24 MR. PEARSON: In order to make sure,
25 the statement to which Mr. Abraham previously

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referred is on Page 2 of this document, near the bottom of the page, where he has inked in five words, "press secretary tore in here," and I would like to have this document designated as Deposition Exhibit No. 2.

Q Let me ask you one question as part of entering this exhibit into the deposition.

After hearing the tape, are you convinced in your own mind that this is an authentic transcript of the conversation which actually occurred at 9:09 a.m. that morning?

A Well, I think that with the stuff that is inked in, it is a lot closer, but I did listen in a hurry. I have a copy of that conversation. I have played it a couple of times. It is not as good as the original but pretty good. I would say that is a reasonably close word-for-word representation of what was said.

MR. PEARSON: With that, let us enter it into the deposition as Exhibit 2.

(Transcript of a portion of a conversation beginning at 9:09 comprising three pages, the first page of which is headed "03-259-CH7/25-PD-1," here in marked Abraham Deposition Exhibit 2 for identification, this date.)

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MR. PEARSON: Off the record.

(Discussion held off the record.)

Q Let me double back so I am clear on the facts as they relate to this conversation.

You have indicated that originally you heard the 1200 number from Mr. Critchlow himself, although you are compiling that statement from a review of this transcript?

A From listening to the tapes. I don't really -- you asked me before to indicate what I remembered, and I don't remember.

Q Fine.

A But I have heard my own voice, and I believe the tape is really the substance of that conversation. It is a good representation. I don't reject it, and I think the tape makes clear what I said and why I said it, and where I got the information from.

Q To your recollection, and I guess you do not recollect it, so I cannot ask that question, but to your understanding --

A I do remember this, though: That was the first time that day that I had heard that number.

Q And your understanding was that it was an off-site reading?

2 A Oh, yes, yes, and I know why.

3 Q Could you recollect --

4 A I know why I thought that, and I do recollect.

5 I couldn't see a whole bunch of Civil Defense people

6 swarming on-site, site access was difficult, and

7 couldn't see Civil Defense people getting numbers

8 there, and that was the impression, that they were

9 getting numbers.

10 I was told by somebody on-site, but I felt

11 that that number was being used as though it were

12 an off-site number.

13 Q Do you recall if you made any telephone
14 conversations after receiving word from Mr. Critchlow
15 as to the 1200 reading prior to this telephone call?

16 A I don't recall any; that is why I say it is my
17 recollection that this is the first time I got to deal
18 with them. There were several immediately afterward.

19 Q This is your first immediate response
20 to that new information?

21 A It was to make headquarters aware because
22 Critchlow said, "If we aren't getting some, start
23 getting some accurate, up-to-date information from
24 the NRC, who else can we get it from?" And I told
25 him I would do my best to clarify it.

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2 Q That last statement was your recollection
3 based on the tape?

4 A My reading of the tape, and my belief that that
5 is exactly what happened, yes.

6 Q Do you have any recollection from the event
7 itself as to the reaction at headquarters after you
8 placed this call? Did they think it was new informa-
9 tion? Were they surprised, or have you no recollection
10 of that?

11 A No.

12 Q No recollection?

13 A No, although one would surmise from the voice
14 that I heard in the background, which is not in the
15 original transcript, that somebody somewhere said,
16 "It's true, I guess," you know, and here is another
17 second important point I want to make. I spend 20
18 years as a newspaper reporter, and in the NRR and AEC,
19 my job was to handle information, and when somebody
20 says, "I guess," that is practically saying, "I don't
21 know." When somebody says, "I guess," that means
22 they don't really know, and I want to be cautious about
23 who I pass that information on to, and I say you are
24 welcome to listen to the tapes. I think it is very
25 clear, and I think that view was one I had all that

2 morning until a much later conversation, where I was
3 told the Chairman is going to call the Governor, and
4 they are going to talk about it, and at that time,
5 which was some hours later, I felt they had a handle
6 on what was going on; that view was confirmed by
7 another transcript of a conversation that I want to
8 talk about, which is also a piece of a transcript that
9 was brought by two members of the Commission that
10 visited me.

11 Q You have noted on Page 2 that one of the
12 participants in that conversation was Mr. Fouchard.

13 A There I recognized his voice.

14 Q You are certain from listening to the
15 tapes that it was Mr. Fouchard?

16 A He asked me, "Where did Civil Defense get the
17 1200 number?" It sounds to me like Fouchard. I am not
18 a voice analyst, but it sounds to me like Fouchard.

19 MS. MOE: That is Mr. Fouchard, yes.

20 Q After this conversation, what did you do?

21 A I waited for the people in Washington to get
22 back to me with some statements as to what this
23 meant so that I could pass it on to the Governor's
24 press secretary, and the third reason I am referring
25 to this: This makes a turning point in my role, and

2 at that point, the flow of information to the Governor's
3 Office really being hindered by the physical communi-
4 cations links being saturated -- the telephone system
5 being saturated, and by listening a little bit later
6 and listening to the radio -- playing the radio into
7 the telephone to keep the circuits open -- constantly
8 the phone company asking people not to make calls; the
9 phone system was saturated, very quickly being
10 apparent -- I don't know if we discussed it in so
11 many words with Fouchard, and to start a backup for
12 communications. The person using the office to clip
13 newspapers, his name was Ronald, I impressed him in
14 the service as a runner when I had messages to send
15 down to Critchlow -- then operating not in his offices,
16 but in the Governor's suite. I would write things out,
17 and he would take things down to Critchlow, and
18 sometimes answers came or not, depending on information.

19 This was all getting to be a real problem, and
20 I wanted to be doing something different than public
21 affairs. Don't give me news media calls and shut my
22 office from the news media for hours and hours, tele-
23 phone-wise, but I did have occasionally reporters come
24 in and visit me and reflected on the tapes I was
25 talking to reporters, and at one point headquarters,

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2 and somebody asked if the reporter can hear this
3 because what they wanted to do was to get to the
4 Governor first.

5 MR. PEARSON: Off the record.

6 (Discussion held off the record.)

7 MR. PEARSON: Let us go back on the record.

8 Q Prior to this brief recess, I asked you
9 what you did after the first conversation, which is
10 a reference to Deposition Exhibit 2, and you said you
11 began waiting to be called by headquarters. Why don't
12 you proceed with the story from that point?

13 A Well, a few minutes went by, and now in recon-
14 struction, I guess, about 14 or 15 minutes, and someone
15 from the state again came into my office -- I don't
16 remember whether it was Critchlow again, or it could
17 have been Roland Page, or could even have been Dave
18 Milne, but people were coming in giving me statements
19 and asking me questions, and so on, and in connection
20 with that, and this is a piece of transcript, the actual
21 piece of transcript that was given to me a few weeks
22 ago when I was interviewed by two members of your staff,
23 Rubin and Sandman. They gave this to me. They asked
24 me to read it and asked me to explain why I said what
25 I said. One of them wrote in the right hand column,

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2 "?Why?" and handed it to me that way.

3 MR. PEARSON: Let us enter it into the
4 deposition as Deposition Exhibit No. 3. It
5 is a three-page document purporting to represent
6 two separate conversations, one beginning at
7 9:23, and the other at 9:35, and at the top of
8 the first of the three pages, which are stapled
9 together, are the following numbers:
10 03-019-CH 2/20-sw-12. Let us mark this as
11 Deposition Exhibit 3.

12 (Above-described document herein marked
13 Abraham Deposition Exhibit 3 for identification,
14 this date.)

15 (Continued on Page 71.)

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2 Q With respect to Deposition Exhibit 3,
3 have you heard the tapes that correspond with this
4 transcript?

5 A Yes, I have, and I have also, in connection with
6 the 9:23 conversation, which represents the first
7 two pages of this, just three days ago, asked someone
8 else at our headquarters, Mr. Joe Hegner, who is
9 in the office, the Executive Office for Operations
10 Support, to listen to this same tape, and to give me
11 his transcript of the conversation as he hears it,
12 and that I did, on the basis of having asked that
13 day to have the tape played from the machine into
14 the telephone, and listening to it here in my office,
15 and hearing things on it that I felt were substantially
16 different than the words in the transcript that I was
17 asked to identify by your staff.

18 They gave this to me, and they particularly
19 pointed out the second page of this transcript, and
20 they asked me to explain what appears to be, but in
21 fact is not, the suggestion that we attempt to conceal
22 information that we have and that we believe to be
23 correct information.

24 There is a very long silence on their tape
25 when they gave this to me to read. I said I didn't

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2 recollect the conversation. I said it doesn't really
3 make any sense, and I couldn't imagine in my wildest
4 dreams making the statement that they believed I had
5 made, that in one breath I told them to try to cover
6 up some information, and in the very next sentence
7 told them that the news is on its way out. It is
8 insane, and I wrestled with this problem between their
9 visit and the 13th of August, and I finally decided
10 that not only didn't it make any sense, but it was
11 altogether out of character to do that, and I asked
12 to have the tape played, and I think it was very clear
13 that what I was doing was informing headquarters of
14 the additional development that not only Civil Defense
15 people brought information to the Governor that the
16 Governor wanted to evaluate and have confirmed or
17 denied by our own people, but that in fact, this is
18 already out to the news media, and that in place of
19 the phrase, as contained in the original transcript
20 (Indicating), that Civil Defense people who are in
21 touch with the news media "have indicated that the
22 story they are getting now is that there is an unplanned
23 and so far uncontrolled release," and that in fact
24 what I said is, "These Civil Defense people, some of
25 whom are also in touch with news media, have indicated

2 that the story is getting out that there is an unplanned
3 and so far uncontrolled release."

4 Q I think you have changed or inserted in
5 your own handwriting words to make that correction
6 within the transcript.

7 A That is correct, and I think that is self-
8 explanatory, and I was telling headquarters, as I
9 would all through the morning, as I felt it was a
10 valuable thing to do, and they encouraged me to do
11 that. I wanted to tell them what the people in the
12 area were learning, what they were finding out about,
13 and how they were reacting. I reported news radio
14 broadcasts, reported the Civil Defense siren going
15 off, and eventually why it was going off, and a number
16 of other things, and if you listen to the conversation
17 on Channel 7, which is the channel I ultimately kept
18 open for hours, you will find me on occasion asking,
19 "Should I let the phone go?" and "Should I discontinue
20 this and go back to what I would normally do," which
21 is to respond to the news media.

22 They said, "No, keep the channel open and stay
23 there," and so I continued to act as a backup com-
24 munications link between the Governor's press secretary,
25 who was bringing me things that the Governor had an

2 interest in, and people in Washington, and what I was
3 doing was acting as an answering service, in effect,
4 which has no special glamor attached to it, but seemed
5 at that point to be very necessary.

6 But the point I am trying to make with this
7 transcript was that I can certainly understand why
8 anybody reading the original version of the transcript
9 could believe why I was trying to do something improper.
10 The actual call was clear and unambiguous. What it
11 clearly says is that the Governor is still saying he
12 doesn't have enough information to make a decision,
13 but expects to have it very soon, but the news of
14 something going on is already getting out, that the
15 Civil Defense people are in touch with the news media,
16 and that we should make our people aware that the
17 news is getting out, not of the 1200 MR per hour -- we
18 did that earlier -- and at this point, and I think it
19 is a very important point to make, the time of this
20 conversation is 9:35 a.m. --

21 Q That is the second of the two conversations?

22 A No -- I am sorry; you are right.

23 At 9:23 a.m., at the time of this conversation,
24 it was still my belief that this whole thing was a
25 misunderstanding, that somebody was talking about

2 some place off-site where there were 1200 MR per hour.

3 Q You thought the reading was not true?

4 A No reason to believe it was true.

5 Q Let me ask you one further question on
6 the transcript, just for the record.

7 Is it your statement that the transcript, as
8 it has now been modified by red ink insertions in
9 your handwriting, is an accurate statement or
10 accurate recount of the actual conversation?

11 A It is very, very accurate in part, and I have
12 another document here, and that is the listening to
13 this same original tape by Mr. Hegner, and the memo
14 that he just sent the 15th of August, in which he
15 has typed out that portion of the transcript which
16 directly contains the information that I was questioned
17 about by your staff, and I think in place of -- I do
18 not have this tape on my recording here, and in place
19 of it, I asked him to send this to me, and I think
20 that they both represent an accurate portrayal of
21 what was in that telephone conversation.

22 MR. PEARSON: Perhaps we should enter
23 the second document also into the deposition.

24 A (Continuing.) I have a copy of that, and there
25 is the other one for which you are going to make me

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some copies. (Handing.)

MR. PEARSON: The next deposition exhibit, which would be No. 4, is a memorandum from Joe Hegner to Karl Abraham, dated August 15, 1979, and the subject is "March 30, 1979 conversation between J. Fouchard and K. Abraham," and attached to this cover page is a transcript of the conversation itself, and I would like that marked as Deposition Exhibit 4.

(Above-described document herein marked Abraham Deposition Exhibit 4 for identification, this date.)

A Now, there is one more point --

MS. MOE: Do you want to clarify that Mr. Hegner listened to this from the original tape in Washington?

A There is one more point that I would like to make in connection with this exhibit, which is the conversation at 9:09 a.m. (Indicating Exhibit 2.)

It provides the basis, when reflected against the latter conversations, of my belief that at that hour and for some time thereafter, headquarters people that I was talking to in these conversations could

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2 not tell exactly what the significance of the 1200 MR
3 per hour was.

4

5 On Page 2 of Exhibit 2, I am asked -- keep in
6 mind, now, I am sitting in the office of the Governor's
7 press secretary, not at the site; I have no instruments,
8 but I am asked to say, "At what point is it supposed
9 to be," meaning where did the measurements --

9

10 The question is, "Where did Civil Defense get
11 the 1200 number?"

11

12 And then there is a voice in the background, and
13 then the voice that says, "What point is it supposed
14 to be?" And I say, "They got that number from the
15 plant officials that called them," meaning that is
16 what I have been told, meaning that the Civil
17 Defense, I am informed --

17

Q Where are you on the transcript?

18

A I am right here. (Indicating.) Okay?

19

Q Okay.

20

A "They got that number from the plant official
21 that called them."

22

23 I already said that -- up at the top of the
24 page, I already said, "Somebody at the plant has
25 informed the Civil Defense people that they had
sometime this morning an uncontrolled release,"

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2 and so on and so forth. We already established that
3 this news was brought to me by Critchlow. They are
4 asking me where did the number come from, and then
5 a voice I couldn't identify asks me, yelling into
6 the phone over Fouchard's shoulder, with Fouchard
7 holding the phone -- maybe we were on a speaker box:
8 "Karl, at what point is that supposed to be? Off-site,
9 nearest point?" And I say, and this is my voice, and
10 I have not written it in here, but I will if you
11 like, "I have no other information than what I've
12 given you."

13 And the next sentence indicates it came from
14 the Governor's press secretary, and I think it is all
15 very clear what I was passing on to the people; at
16 that hour, they were not able to confirm or deny. In
17 fact, they didn't seem to have any other information
18 against which to reflect this, and if you look at the
19 other transcripts, in the hour or so following that,
20 there is a conversation with Joe Fouchard which says,
21 in effect, "Yes, we are now trying to evaluate this
22 thing, and we are trying to tell the Governor, and
23 we will get back to him as soon as we can, or words
24 to that effect, so I knew, because I was told, that
25 there was no clear agreement; there was no understanding;

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2 there was no knowledge; it was not a fact that anybody
3 knew where this 1200 MR was, and it was my concern that
4 the number would be taken as an off-site reading,
5 when all I knew was that this was way, way too high
6 for an off-site reading, that I was expressing, you
7 got to let people know that this was getting out in
8 the news media because the questions I was always
9 getting from the news media, "What is the area of
10 highest risk?" "What have you measured in this
11 community?" or "What have you measured in that community?"

12 That was the mindset of the community, if you
13 will, and I knew that that that must be how many of
14 them were interpreting this.

15 Q There is one thing I am a little unclear
16 about. I thought earlier you said, when you got the
17 information from Critchlow, you were told that this
18 was off-site.

19 A That was a surmise. I was not told -- he wanted
20 to know what it meant. I surmised that it was an off-
21 site reading because of the relation to Civil Defense
22 people, because I had no knowledge or couldn't
23 envision Civil Defense people being on the site under
24 an emergency situation. Their job really is off-site.
25 They all had survey instruments, but wouldn't be

2 on-site to make surveys; it would be out in the
3 communities.

4 Q So that your knowledge is as reflected
5 in the 9:09 conversation, as reflected in Deposition
6 Exhibit 2?

7 A Yes, and the phrase that I guess was heard in
8 the background tipped me off right away that there
9 wasn't any clear knowledge in Washington, either,
10 about what that number meant and where it came from,
11 and whether it was believable.

12 Q This 9:23 conversation reflected in
13 Deposition Exhibit 3, who placed this call?

14 A I placed all the calls.

15 Q You placed the call?

16 A I think I placed all the calls. It says
17 "Operations Center, Ward speaking," and then I, "This
18 is Karl Abraham. I need to speak to Joe Fouchard."

19 Q By this time, did you get any response from
20 the Incident Response Center to respond to your first
21 call at 9:09?

22 A No, not that I recall, and I have got a -- these
23 are my own notes of the log kept by his secretary of
24 the conversations that involved me, and there doesn't
25 seem to be any other conversations. The next

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2 conversation after 9:23 was not until 9:34, and that
3 is the third page of that exhibit. (Indicating
4 Exhibit 3.)

5

Q What happened, if you know, if anything,
6 between the 9:23 conversation and the 9:35 conver-
7 sation?

8

A At that time, I was still hoping that I could
9 get a call through when I wanted to because of the
10 WATS line. It wasn't until a little later that even
11 that began to be a little difficult, not because I
12 couldn't get the call through, but because when the
13 operator at headquarters responded to the call, she
14 would put me on "hold," and that inflicted dead air
15 space on the telephone, and there appears to be a
16 sampling mechanism in the telephone circuits which
17 says if you don't hear anything on the line, vacate
18 the line; I kept getting disconnected automatically,
19 and it was getting to be a problem until finally,
20 and there is a transcript where I talked to Ward or
21 somebody there about it, and having this problem,
22 and he said, "I am having it, too." He said, "Keep
23 talking."

24

"No, I am going to play a radio into the
25 telephone because that noise will keep the line going."

2 Once I hit on that scheme, which was a little
3 after this, that line went on for hours. They put
4 me on Channel 7, and I think there are hours' worth
5 of conversations, beginning about 11 o'clock and
6 running well on into the afternoon.

7 Q Is the next event that you then recall
8 on Friday morning the conversation of 9:35?

9 A Yes, the next one after 9:23 is 9:35. I don't
10 really recall it, but that is the next transcript I
11 found, and it was logged in the log, and I think I
12 listened to that tape, and I probably have it on my
13 copy here.

14 Q We have the copy of the transcript, so
15 unless there is something you would like to comment
16 on with respect to that conversation itself, we will
17 simply proceed on to the next event.

18 Is there anything you would like to comment on?

19 A Only to point out that where again I seem to
20 be repeating what I said earlier, "The Civil Defense
21 people say they're getting information from the plant
22 saying that the radiation releases are high and that
23 they should consider starting immediate evacuation."

24 That was, again, a report from Critchlow's
25 staff or somebody from that group coming to me and

2 keeping me aware of what the Governor is getting from
3 the Civil Defense people, and my saying, "Our people
4 tell me that the highest reading they've gotten at a
5 point across the river, a sample that is 30 MRs per
6 hour."

7 I am not sure that that is accurate because I
8 wouldn't refer to a measurement of 30 MRs per hour
9 as a sample. A sample usually implies a liquid or
10 soil or simply a wipe, and these measurements are
11 being made with direct measuring instruments, I know--
12 I have not identified -- I didn't take the time to
13 identify these voices, and I don't recollect now who
14 they are, but I believe this is my voice, and I want
15 to point that out.

16 Q Which is your voice?

17 A (Indicating.) This one. I will write it in
18 here. I believe it is mine. If you want to play
19 that tape, we can all listen to whether it is my
20 voice or not, but I think this is. I believe that
21 this is my voice -- okay.

22 MS. MOE: The part that you are identifying
23 as your voice begins, "Our people tell me that
24 the highest reading they've gotten..."

25 A I will put a question mark there. I think it

2 is my voice.

3 MR. PEARSON: For the record, this will
4 be on the 9:35 conversation that is part of
5 Deposition Exhibit 3, and whoever looks at the
6 transcript will note that his name has been
7 inked in in red with a question mark to the
8 left of his name.

9 A The reason I point this out is that I have
10 been saying all along that I believed the highest
11 number that anybody at the NRC told me about right
12 across the river from Trailer City was 30 MR per hour
13 at 9:35 a.m., as reflected in the conversation, and
14 this is the proof of this -- when Critchlow and his
15 people and such reporters as I talked to, and those
16 who walked in on the telephone asked me, you know;
17 everybody was becoming aware that there was a release
18 going on. The radio broadcasts I heard soon after
19 this conversation, in fact, had a reporter interviewing
20 a Civil Defense guy and saying there has been a release
21 and getting high levels and so on, but the number I
22 had at that point that I felt I could have some
23 confidence in, because it was a number that came
24 from our environmental measurements people in our
25 trailer out at Trailer City, was 30 MR, and I was

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asked by your two people, Rubin and Sandman, what I
believed. Off-site, I said I believed the worst was
30 MR, and I think this is the documentation of the
fact that that was my thought.

(Continued on Page 85.)

Q During this time were you receiving information from any sources with respect to what NRC Bethesda was doing with this information?

A No, except that I had a general perception that there must be an awful lot of reporters hanging around the Public Affairs office.

Q Were you discussing with Mr. Critchlow at that point, or with any other persons, how the State might respond with this information?

A No, I think it was just understood that if they got some numbers that indicated an off-site problem, that the Governor was going to have to make a decision about an evacuation, or some action, and that was just implied in everything, and no need to discuss that. That was left over from the discussion from the night before. You asked me earlier did I have any recollection about whether there was a discussion of evacuation, or the requirements, or the possibility, and I think I answered that question that there was a thought that we might have to do it, but there wasn't any reason to believe we would have to do it.

Well, clearly, that situation was not changed when this 1200 MR thing came along, and

2:1c

7-cont.)

2 I had just surmised, I think correctly, that the
3 first time the Governor heard that, he'd say, "Now
4 is the time I am going to figure out what I am going
5 to do, what I have known since last night that I
6 have to do," and that was known by everybody.

7 Q Your initial reaction to this information
8 was suspicion or disbelief?

9 A Disbelief, just on two accounts: the number;
10 the source of information by hearsay was Civil
11 Defense people, and I didn't have every reason to
12 believe that they really got good measurements from
13 any place on-site -- thought it was off-site, and
14 said they were told by company officials, and all
15 the numbers I got from my own people was it was not
16 even close, not even ballpark.

17 Q Did you share that disbelief with anybody?

18 A Yes, that was implied in the earlier conversation,
19 where I said, if I may go back to Page 2 of Exhibit 3,
20 where I am talking about "uncontrolled release from
21 the site, and the best that we can do right now is
22 to make sure they don't use that high 1200 MR per
23 hour number," meaning as an off-site number outside
24 the site.

25 "But I think you have to tell people that this

2 news is on its way out," which means that people are
3 getting -- that it is measurement off-site -- that
4 is not clear from the transcript, but I think it would
5 be clear from the recording if you listen to it, that
6 that was understood to be my concern that we would
7 really be doing something bad to the public if we led
8 them to believe that there was some place off-site
9 that had 1200 MR per hour, and then it turned out it
10 was just a misunderstanding.

11 Q Did you tell that to the Governor or
12 anybody on his staff?

13 A I think they understood that I couldn't confirm
14 the 1200 MR per hour number, and that made it suspi-
15 cious, and Critchlow is eminently intelligent
16 to realize that is suspicious as an off-site number.

17 Q You did not tell Mr. Critchlow point-blank
18 that you just did not believe these numbers?

19 A I don't remember doing that. This is surmise
20 after the fact, but I think that he must have under-
21 stood that if I thought that was true, I would just
22 have said to him, "Yes, our people tell me they are
23 getting those kinds of numbers in Middletown, Goldsboro,
24 Hershey." If I had known -- if I had information of
25 my own knowledge that would have allowed me to say

2 to Critchlow, I can confirm this, which is what I
3 knew he was looking for, because he said so in so many
4 words in that earlier conversation, "We have to know
5 what it is one way or the other," it was very clear
6 that he wanted me to try to clarify it for him -- if
7 I had been able to either say it is just out-and-out
8 not true, or if I had been able to say, yes, it is
9 true, I would have thought somebody in authority would
10 have told you by now, which is the kind of thing I
11 would say.

12 If I had been able to say either one of those
13 things, I certainly would have said them, but I had
14 no reason to believe that this number had anything to
15 do with anything off-site. I didn't know that it was
16 true. I had no reason to believe it, and I disbelieved
17 it in that context.

18 Q Did you have any reason to think that
19 Mr. Critchlow would or would not believe that
20 information, absent some confirmation of it? That
21 may be a difficult question for you to answer.

22 A I think politically -- "politically" is the
23 wrong word -- if you have to make a decision and the
24 only information you have is hearsay and the conse-
25 quences of the decision are going to involve many

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2 thousands of people, I would think that a smart man
3 will say, I will defer the decision until I get some
4 better information one way or the other, and I also
5 just assumed that the Governor's staff is a good
6 staff, and the Governor is a sharp guy, and I would
7 have expected him to say, if I have to take an action
8 that is going to have an impact on so many people --
9 I think that was understood. I don't think anybody
10 had to say that out loud.

11 Q After these conversations occurred,
12 which led us into 9:35 and thereafter on the morning
13 of Friday, what was the next involvement you had
14 with respect to the 1200 millirem question?

15 A I do not have written transcripts to read of
16 a whole lot of conversations that I had with head-
17 quarters; between 9:35 and noon, roughly, I had
18 approximately 12 conversations of various lengths
19 on various subjects, for which I have not obtained
20 any kind of written transcript, but I have recorded
21 on tape because I wanted to -- I listened to them.
22 I went back to headquarters a couple of weeks after
23 your two colleagues visited me, and I wanted to see
24 if my other conversations later on in the morning
25 would throw any light on the two questions that they

2 raised in the pieces of transcript they did give to
3 me. I have listened to them. I transcribed them
4 for my own use on a cassette. It is my belief that
5 anybody who listens to those tapes would say that
6 they only confirm the way that I am now characterizing
7 them for you; that I was passing statements containing
8 information, the credibility of which was usually
9 unassessed, to headquarters, and that factual
10 information to the Governor from people at head-
11 quarters was going back most of the time through a
12 different channel.

13 I was told several times, yes, the Chairman is
14 going to call the Governor, and it was my understanding
15 that if the Governor was going to get some kind of
16 information, that it would be better to have it
17 correct, and what I was doing was providing a backup
18 channel.

19 There are conversations where somebody says,
20 "Can you get a message to the Governor and tell him
21 such and such." It is all in the transcripts. I
22 have no real recollection of any of it, but I do
23 have it on tape, and it is very clear that that is
24 what I was doing.

25 Q I notice that you have in front of you

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2 a notebook where you have listed the different
3 conversations.

4 A Yes.

5 Q Would it be possible to get a copy of
6 that page so our record of the conversations are
7 the same as yours, and that it then would be clearer
8 for everybody's purpose.

9 A Yes, of course.

10 I want to make it clear that this page was
11 written not at the time. This is not a record of
12 the conversations as I made them; the times that
13 are indicated are the times that are displayed on
14 the recording playing device at headquarters, and
15 this was a log I made one night within the last two
16 weeks when I happened to be visiting Washington for
17 a meeting.

18 In fact; this log was made on the evening of
19 a press conference at which the I&E investigation
20 report was released by Mr. Stello and his associates.
21 When I finished with that early in the evening, before
22 coming back to Philadelphia, I went back to the
23 center where these tapes are and spent three or
24 four hours listening to the tapes and making this
25 copy I have, so whatever the date is, that is the

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date I was listening --

MR. PEARSON: With that stipulation, we will enter this page in his notebook as Deposition Exhibit 5. Perhaps at the end of the deposition, we can have a photocopy made of that page, and mark the photocopy as the actual deposition exhibit.

THE WITNESS: Whichever way you like. I would like to have copies with the exhibit stamps. If you are going to have copies made of all these, make me a set; then you can have the originals. These originals came from your office.

MS. MOE: We can do it now.

MR. PEARSON: May we proceed, even in your absence?

MS. MOE: Yes. I will just be a minute.

(Handwritten document headed "Tape Log" herein marked Abraham Deposition Exhibit 5 for identification, this date.)

Q During this period, which roughly goes from about nine o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock in the morning on Friday the 30th, were you receiving any information with respect to any

2 recommendations for evacuation, or other response
3 that might have been going on?

4 A Yes, indirectly. I had one glimpse only, and
5 again I am now trying to remember a tape that I
6 heard, of which I don't have a transcript; at least,
7 I don't think it is included in any of these. This
8 was a conversation much later in the morning. It is
9 one of the tapes that is on this notebook page that
10 is being copied, where I am asked by a member of
11 the Governor's staff, "Is it true that Collins has
12 recommended an evacuation?"

13 And my response, as always, was, "I don't have
14 any idea, but I will call headquarters and find out,"
15 and I got hold of somebody on the other end, and I
16 asked the question, and he turns around and says,
17 "Hey, Collins, did you recommend an evacuation?"

18 And there is some answer, I think you can hear
19 it on the tape, to the effect that, "Yeah, that is
20 what I was asked to do," or "that is what I was
21 told to do" or "that is what we decided to do," or
22 something like that, and I said, "Okay."

23 And I think the person who came in to get that
24 was right there with me, and this is memory. How
25 accurate it is I don't know, but I think that was

2 a sufficiently short conversation that that was the
3 person there, and I think I probably turned around
4 and said, "Yes, apparently that is so," or words to
5 that effect.

6 Now, I think you may or may not find that
7 in the transcript because, as I said, the people
8 who did the transcript apparently just transcribed
9 my voice and the person I was going to, but the
10 background stuff -- and the relaying of the message
11 back to me, I think, can be clearly understood on
12 the tape.

13 As best I can recall, that was the only time
14 that I got into that directly.

15 I learned from the news media, and this opens
16 up a whole new area that your colleagues asked me,
17 which was how did information get out to the public.

18 As I heard the radio broadcast, several broad-
19 casts, where the Governor held news conferences,
20 Roland, the press secretary held news conferences,
21 and I was constantly being assured that information
22 was being passed on from the site, and the release
23 and what the levels were, and there were discussions
24 with local officials, regular kinds of news stuff,
25 different interviews being spliced in and fed out on

2 the air, and so I think that was going on, and Rubin
3 asked me a couple of weeks ago, whatever happened
4 with the joint information center, which is what we
5 had that the state was running out of the Capitol
6 with the Governor's press secretary being the principal
7 spokesman. I didn't think I could get a better deal
8 than that.

9 I said I thought that was fortuitous because
10 of the nearness of the state Capitol and the news
11 media presence, and I expect we won't have that kind
12 of situation again, but that in effect was what was
13 happening. NRC people, and myself in a few cases,
14 and other people in other cases, were feeding
15 information to the state, and on throughout the
16 morning, updates were being given to the news media,
17 who, as I understood it -- I didn't go down and look
18 at the operation, but it was in a large waiting room
19 out in the Governor's Office, with television
20 cameras set up and radio people, and people were
21 getting out in front of the microphone periodically
22 and having a news briefing and being taped, and
23 going out on the air, and it sounded to me like it
24 was pretty up-to-date information and had the ring
25 in it of consultation with the NRC because they

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2 started picking up the kind of language that we
3 continued to use when we talk about these things,
4 and consultation with Tom Gerusky, who had a man in
5 the control room on-site, a technical person he was
6 getting information from.

7

8 It all sounded to me like this information was
9 getting out. It wasn't getting out from me because
10 this was somebody else doing it.

11

12 Q Specifically on Friday, did you know of
13 conversations going on between Governor Thornburgh
14 and Chairman Hendrie?

15

16 A Yes, I was told at one point in the morning
17 that I should send a message down to the Governor to
18 expect a call from Chairman Hendrie. They were
19 trying to get through at this point. We were keeping
20 the line open. My thought was, if worse comes to
21 worst, the Governor could come up in this office
22 and talk on this line, which is one of the reasons
23 we were keeping it open. As it turned out, they were
24 able to get through. I was told the Chairman was
25 taking to the Governor now. I can't tell you the
time right now, but it is easy to find out because
it is on the tapes.

26

27 Q You did not participate in and overhear

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2 the conversations between the two persons?

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A No. I was a whole floor away; never moved from
4 the communications office I was in

5

Q Did you get prior notice that the Governor
6 might issue an evacuation notice to pregnant women
7 and children within five miles?

8

A No, not that I recall, and I don't think it
9 was anything in these conversations that I recall
10 either; that the particulars of what the response
11 would be or what the NRC's recommendation would be
12 went straight -- it is still my belief that it went
13 straight from the Chairman to the Governor.

14

Q Did you ever receive a responsive call
15 from the NRC, Bethesda, as you hoped to receive it,
16 after you placed the 9:09 telephone call? You had
17 hoped to get confirmation with respect to readings.
18 My question is with respect to whether that confirma-
19 tion ever arrived.

20

A I have no recollection that it did. If it did,
21 it is wiped out.

22

What I was doing was listening to a lot of radio
23 news shows. If you listen to the tapes, you can see
24 me going from station to station to station. Every
25 time there was a news broadcast about Three Mile

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2 Island, I turned up the volume, and the guy at the
3 other end listening a good bit of time, and occasionally
4 asking, "Are you still listening?"

5 "Yes, still listening."

6 I thought it was just added information of what
7 was going on in town, and I don't think we will ever
8 again have a response to an accident where we won't
9 have some NRC person at the side of the Governor with
10 good communications, being able to provide direct
11 information, and I thought that what little I could
12 do to let the people at headquarters know how the
13 community was reacting, what the Governor's needs
14 were, as reflected by the news media, especially
15 radio, which is so fast, which is really a good
16 indicator of a number of things:

17 "Are you getting close to a panic?"

18 "No, you never were."

19 You will find in the transcripts my playing
20 radio stations, going from station to station, and
21 there is nothing but music on.

22 "I haven't heard anything for a while about
23 Three Mile Island. These people can't be very upset,"
24 or words to that effect. It gave you a real feeling.

25 Then when the siren went off, there was a lot

1
2 of concern. The people in Washington could hear the
3 siren through my loop. I turned the radio up, and
4 there is the siren going off, and you could hear the
5 siren directly. There were windows open.

6 I thought that provided people in Washington,
7 even to that limited extent, some capacity for seeing
8 what was going on right in Harrisburg.

9 They asked questions: "What is going on outside?"

10 I said, "I will look out the window. People
11 are just walking. Cars driving by at normal speed.
12 There is no traffic jam," and this is a main downtown
13 intersection.

14 "I understand some Government employees had
15 gone home for the day," and that was true that they
16 did, "and I don't see anything out there, not anything
17 even like of there were a fire or a hurricane; nobody
18 rushing, everybody walking, people coming -- still
19 coming into the Capitol Building."

20 That is good information to have if you want
21 to know what is going on with the people. They seemed
22 at the other end to be very happy to have it.

23 Q Did you have any involvement with the
24 decision to have Mr. Denton come out, and more or
25 less take charge on Friday?

2 A I am not sure. I am not sure. At one point,
3 and this I remember -- I have not even until just
4 now, and I never heard this tape or saw the
5 transcript -- I had a conversation with somebody at
6 headquarters where I said, "You've got to get some-
7 body out here."

8 I may have said, "You've got to have somebody
9 of stature, somebody at a high level; you got the
10 Governor to deal with," but I don't know what time
11 of day I said that and I don't know where -- that is
12 not on -- I don't think that is on any of these
13 conversations that I copied, but I made that comment.
14 It is even possible that I could have made it the
15 night before, somewhere around the long -- I don't
16 remember what day I made it. Obviously, it had
17 to be before about 2:30 Friday. I was informed
18 that Fouchard was coming -- that Denton was going
19 to come up. It was fairly early, and that was the
20 feedback I got, that they let me know, and Fouchard
21 and I talked about who was going to pick him up at
22 the airport, and should I leave or should someone
23 from Region I -- somewhere along the line I said,
24 we really ought to have somebody here who has got
25 some stature or words to that effect. That was a

2 purely personal impression, and I can't even remember
3 why I said it, but I think you will find it somewhere
4 in the transcripts.

5 Q Is there anything else that you would like
6 to add with respect to this 1200 millirem reading
7 and all of the consequences that it generated,
8 because if not, we will simply go forward?

9 A There is a personal comment I made to your
10 colleagues and I would like to make now.

11 Q Okay.

12 A I said before that I had played some roles,
13 and I don't mean to imply that I had served in some
14 ways that I had not anticipated. I am sure that
15 there are people in the news media who felt that I
16 was purposely, intentionally separating myself from
17 them, denying them access to me because I was trying
18 to conceal something or stall or so on, but in fact,
19 I felt that the lack of having anybody else from the
20 NRC in the Capitol, and in view of the deteriorating
21 communications which I think is pretty well agreed
22 on, that that posed so great a risk to -- of not
23 keeping the Governor and his staff informed of what
24 there might be to communicate from headquarters,
25 and it turned out to be precious little, and we all

2 agreed that I did not pass on to the Governor much
3 really significant information, but that was hind-
4 sight. I felt that the interest of the public just
5 substantially overrides the interests of the NRC
6 in being able to say it had a good public affairs
7 program that day, and that if I had that decision to
8 make over again, I would make that exactly the same
9 way.

10 What I regret is not yelling in to Washington
11 to get somebody on the helicopter up to the Governor
12 right then and there at 9:09 in the morning to deal
13 with directly, you know. I suppose if I had done
14 that very forcefully, I might well have succeeded
15 in getting somebody at that hour, but I just didn't
16 think to do that, but I felt if for some reason there
17 was a big misunderstanding, for example, this 1200
18 MR number, suppose the Governor decided, "My God, let's
19 evacuate everybody out to 20 miles," one could calcu-
20 late the risk of automobile accidents and miscarriages
21 and all kinds of other things when you evacuate a
22 whole bunch of people.

23 We have hurricane evacuations and other events
24 like this. If it turns out to be entirely unnecessary
25 due to a misunderstanding because we didn't have

1
2 enough communications and people in the right place,
3 that would have been horrible; that is not even a
4 close call. I would make that decision every day in
5 the week, that the agency, as a whole, has this
6 responsibility to meeting the news media. We have
7 a Public Affairs Office in Washington. I did not
8 know then that a whole news center was in the process
9 of being established at East West that afternoon.
10 I felt that for whatever little contribution I could
11 make in this communications process, as great as
12 the risks involved were for all of the people, or my
13 position might potentially be, that that wasn't even
14 a serious consideration, although people have raised
15 it after the fact, you know, but it clearly was a
16 deliberate decision on my part to push for keeping
17 this line open and make the people in Washington
18 aware that there was a way of getting around the
19 communications difficulties.

20 If, in retrospect, it doesn't appear that
21 there was that much accomplished, that has no bearing.
22 I would have been happy to let someone do all this
23 and let me get on with my job. I would have spent
24 more time getting information from the site and more
25 time with Region I. I was fully confident that

2 Jan Strasner was answering the phones downstairs
3 and had people helping him getting information from
4 this room down the hall. The news media were getting
5 responses; they were team covering the story. If
6 a fact was available that could be believed, if it
7 didn't come out in one place, it was bound to come
8 out in another.

9 I have had a chance to reread a lot of news
10 stories written on that day, the next day and there-
11 after in the Friday, Saturday and Sunday newspapers,
12 and it is very clear that all kinds of information
13 was getting out. There was a chronology of the
14 accident the day after the accident. I think it
15 was in the Washington Star. I think it was Fialco,
16 and it has to be a high watermark for enterprise
17 reporting.

18 I was a reporter for 20 years. I was confident
19 that if there was information, that the press would
20 dig it out. I was absolutely confident that if I
21 dried up as a source, other sources would be open;
22 that is what happened. There wasn't anybody else
23 from the NRC in the Capitol.

24 Q Were Messrs. Snyder and Dick Keimig and
25 Joyner there?

2 A They were working all day long.

3 Q Here at Region I?

4 A At Region I, and calls being shuttled after
5 Peter Floyd came from Region I, sat in my office.

6 Q That function was never disrupted, to
7 your knowledge?

8 A I know that it was never disrupted. I did
9 talk to Jan Strasner somewhere right in there along
10 the line of "How things are going in Region I?"

11 "Still getting hundreds and hundreds of calls."

12 Q On Friday morning, after the focus began
13 to shift from the 1200 millirem-evacuation issue,
14 did you then resume the more conventional role of
15 conveying information from person to person?

16 A Yes. That is a good question. I think it
17 probably took a lot longer in the day for me to find
18 out what, in fact, was the informational basis for
19 the actions taken by the Governor, and what, in fact,
20 the information the NRC had that it was sure of. I
21 don't know why I didn't push harder to get a briefing,
22 but after Denton arrived and held his briefings, I
23 found out a lot, right when the news media found it
24 out that night, and this is another problem that we
25 have, one that I am trying to deal with in the

2 planning exercise I am going through.

3 Q Is this Friday night you are now talking
4 about?

5 A Friday afternoon, I knew that Denton and
6 Fouchard are winging their way, and heard the report
7 that helicopters and communications equipment was
8 coming in, and Denton out at the site, and later
9 Fouchard calls in, "going to come in sometime pretty
10 soon now and brief the Governor." I did not attend
11 that briefing of the Governor, I and a whole bunch
12 of other people the Governor's Office couldn't hold.

13 Q Or you would have attended except for
14 the capacity?

15 A Either the capacity or somebody's desire not
16 to invite; that is just idle speculation. It doesn't
17 really matter. The fact is I wasn't there.

18 Q Did your morale drop at all after Friday
19 morning?

20 A Yes. There was no point denying that I was
21 surprised, as I am sure everybody involved was sur-
22 prised, that they couldn't manage the flow of
23 information any better than they could, that their
24 communications were so poor. Communications are
25 my business. I carried a telecopier into Houston

2 with me to cover the space program. I have sent
3 copy over telecopiers from phone booths when people
4 in this country hadn't heard of a telecopier. There
5 was a telecopier in Critchlow's, and by this time
6 everybody had -- Critchlow, maybe one in the
7 Governor's Office, but I know there wasn't anything
8 happening there to speak of. Communications can be
9 set up rapidly.

10 I think the feeling was that if you have a
11 Capitol switchboard and got a lot of trunk lines and
12 so forth, that that was all right, and you got a big
13 office in Washington, that that was all right, but it
14 really turned out not to be dependable. I didn't
15 know until much later. If I hadn't been lucky
16 enough to have a WATS line where I was located, or
17 if the lines had been ordinary telephone lines, my
18 whole line would have been different. I would not
19 have been able to keep a line open to Washington,
20 and I would have been talking to the news media and
21 would have been a public affairs officer all day.
22 The whole thing would have been different unless
23 somebody called up and said, "Abraham, we are having
24 this problem, let's see if we can have the line open,
25 and do this," in which case I said, "Yes, that makes

2 sense."

3 There were times I was learning that people
4 couldn't get through to other people, and that I
5 seemed to be able to do this.

6 I think you can ask the legitimate question
7 whether or not in the big picture, whether that
8 decision was the right one, but I think the communi-
9 cations aspect of emergency response is a tough problem,
10 and that this we really didn't have much -- we just
11 didn't have it; that is all. We tried sometimes.

12 I know for a fact in this region that we have
13 evaluated radio telephones, mobile telephones; we have
14 evaluated all kinds of radio gear and so on. It is
15 really not as good as it is cracked up to be. Emer-
16 gency communications over large distances in a moving
17 situation is tough.

18 Q When did the bubble first become a concern?

19 A To whom?

20 Q To you,

21 A Very late in the game.

22 Q What would that be?

23 A Sunday-Saturday, because my role changed again
24 Saturday drastically, and would remain changed for a
25 couple of weeks.

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Q Could you characterize for us quickly your role on Friday afternoon and Friday evening.

A I let more people come into the office, radio people, Japanese people with microphones and cameras, did interviews, and wanted me to sort of summarize the situation, and looking into a lot of new insight on what was going on at the plant, and wanted to know did I think it was going to get worse. "You know, the Governor has taken an action. It appears to be as much as is needed to do now, to put people on alert that there might be more, an evacuation, and it well might... We just don't know." That kind of thing until Fouchard and Denton showed up, and when I went to talk to Fouchard, who told me about all the gear that was coming in and a lot of other logistics stuff.

 This was the first time we said we might have to set up a news center somewhere, which I didn't really get into until Saturday.

Q Did you speak to Mr. Fouchard about the whole evacuation recommendation?

A No, no, I dropped out of that because I felt public affairs-type things -- who have I got? Who can we get? What is now on its way out? Got people coming out, coming up from Washington. I went to

2 do that. There had to be somebody, and I was it, to
3 start trying to prepare for what was going to be
4 obviously a long-term situation.

5 Q Was it fair to say that you had then no
6 further role with respect to evacuation and emergency;
7 preparedness?

8 A Except for trying to help knock down a certain
9 number of false rumors that got started. Citizens
10 called in, "My neighbor is packing a car."

11 "Where are you? Are you pregnant?"

12 "I am 25 miles away," and I would say, "Stay
13 cool," and that kind of thing. That was it.

14 Once I got off this Channel 7, this long open
15 line, and gradually got back to news, I was out of
16 that loop.

17 (Continued on Page 111.)

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2 Q On Friday morning, did you hear any rumor
3 that the waste gas decay tanks may have very, very
4 little capacity remaining?

5 A No, not then or even now; that is one I missed.

6 Q Did any events of note occur on Friday
7 night or Friday evening?

8 A Well, that was the first joint press conference
9 with Denton and the Governor.

10 Q Okay.

11 A Other than that sucked all the news media
12 away from me, and up to the studio, and I went up there,
13 and I guess I watched it; I think I did. That is all.

14 Q When did you finish your workday on Friday?

15 A Again, in the wee hours of the morning.

16 Q Then I assume you came back to the same
17 site on Saturday morning?

18 A I came back on Saturday and spent most of the day
19 there again, and I was getting some more information;
20 people kept coming in. I had the feeling that
21 Mr. Fouchard and Mr. Denton were drawing people out
22 at the site. They had something going on out there.
23 I had a telephone number for Fouchard. Strasner was out
24 there with me -- out there with Fouchard and the people
25 out there, and the radio and television thing were

1
2 pretty important, and out there were voices with
3 pictures on Saturday. I could feel the news media
4 pressure dropping and people would call me up to see if
5 I knew something nobody else knew.

6 Q Your role shifted on Saturday, you indicated?

7 A Yes.

8 Q How was that?

9 A Mr. Fouchard made a brief mention Friday night
10 or Saturday, we are going to have to set up a news
11 center, so in my trips through Middletown -- on the
12 way to Three Mile Island, you are forced to go through
13 Middletown, and I became aware of a place out there.
14 I went out Saturday afternoon and talked to the Mayor
15 in Middletown, and I said, "If we need to set up a
16 news center, can we use this community room here, this
17 basketball court and kitchen, and so on," and he said,
18 "We will do anything to help you." You know, and later
19 on in the evening when Fouchard and Denton were back in
20 the Capitol -- I don't know if it was just before or
21 just after the press conference that night, or the
22 briefing that night, that Joe said, "I think we really
23 do have to set up a news center operation here somewhere
24 out nearer the site," and I said, "Yes, I guess we do."
25 I can imagine all the news medias descending on the center.

1
2 I said, "Yes, I will be out 7:00 tomorrow morning,"
3 Sunday morning, "and we will start," and we did.

4 At 7:00-8:00, I got volunteer policemen and
5 volunteer firemen, and got tables and chairs set up,
6 and something like a news center got going, and I
7 showed him this, and you can't use this for the
8 President, and you got to tear it all down, and we tore
9 it all down, and then I got to worrying about where we
10 would make transcripts and get Xerox machines and a
11 guard to watch it, and screens and getting the sound
12 system to work, and getting out of the kitchen and into
13 an office where we could close the door and have
14 communications with headquarters and the site, and other
15 public affairs officers arriving from the NRC, and told
16 DOE people were coming later in the day, and the President
17 had his press briefing, and set it all back up again, and
18 the phone company ran cables, and they told them where to
19 string their wires and where to put the tables. It was
20 purely a logistic thing, and for the next couple of weeks
21 there were many occasions -- some logistic things, and
22 the reporter would ask me if I got to go to one of the
23 things, and had paid attention to the temperature ranges
24 in the reactor, and I was worrying if we don't get new
25 wiring, the television guys in the net will blow the

Abraham

1
2 whole thing. We had a fire truck standing out there
3 for every briefing because of such a fire hazard.

4 Q From mid-Saturday on, you became an
5 administrator-coordinator rather than an information
6 relay, if I can use that term?

7 A I am not disconcerted by that fact. You have to
8 have somebody like that. I would expect if we had to
9 do this again, one of the first people who will come
10 to the site is a person who is trained in contracting
11 and procurement. I got all those voucher numbers I signed
12 for the \$16,000 Xerox machines. I expect that person to
13 come out and say, "I am your person for the news centers.
14 You tell me what it is you want, and you tell me what you
15 plan, and I will hand in a plan for every site in the
16 region, and he will provide complete logistics, as
17 independent as possible from policy considerations,
18 such as, is it going to be joint with the licensee, or
19 joint with the state and all that kind of stuff.

20 Q Did you ever hear on Saturday or at any other
21 time a rumor of a sabotage threat at Three Mile Island?

22 A I have had reporters that asked me, do I think
23 that this was sabotage. I have no evidence to indicate
24 that. I haven't heard from anybody that would be in a
25 position to know. What I said, until we get our

Abraham

1
2 investigation going, you can't rule it out altogether.

3 Q Do you have any idea what prompted those
4 questions from reporters?

5 A I could speculate.

6 Q Okay, but no firm --

7 A We have had it over the years brought up
8 repeatedly for lots of events.

9 Q Do you have any information at that time,
10 from Saturday on, of contingency planning going on within
11 the State or NRC for evacuation or other emergency response
12 should the situation deteriorate?

13 A I didn't have any perception of what the NRC was
14 doing, but I finally, you know -- early in the game I
15 didn't really understand what difference existed between
16 Gerusky's office and the Civil Defense people and
17 Colonel Henderson's agency. It didn't exist when I
18 was a reporter in this state, and it is not something
19 I ever ran into before, and all that was new to me that
20 they had an emergency management agency; they had plans,
21 and with this thing about going to Hershey came up, you
22 know, I suddenly became aware that somebody really did
23 have some idea what they were going to do on the state
24 part, but that was the extent of it. As best I remember
25 it now, that was my full awareness of that.

1
2 Q Did you have any role in the preparation
3 to receive the President on Sunday?

4 A Only that which I have described to you plus a
5 very funny incident.

6 Q What is that, if brief?

7 A I told you we were working in the kitchen. You
8 know, in fact, on Monday the senior citizens served a
9 hot lunch off our Xerox machine. On Sunday there was a
10 last-minute need for some retyping of a page of the text
11 of what the President's remarks were going to be, and the
12 only typewriter we had was on a folding table in the
13 kitchen, an electric typewriter, and it shook like a
14 bowl full of Jello, and the person who had to type
15 asked, "Isn't there anything we can do?" I weigh
16 200 pounds, and plunked it up against the table, and
17 for 15 minutes or so that is what I did.

18 Yes, there was something about where people were
19 going to sit, where the news media were going to sit, and
20 where the VIP's were going to sit, and whose chairs are
21 going to be where. That happens at every press conference
22 where the President appears, and some Congressmen wanted
23 to be up front, and some photographer was already down
24 on the ground with cameras aimed.

25 "Why don't you put your chair here," and there was

1
2 that, but that is routine stuff.

3 Q After Sunday, was there any events that
4 occurred with respect to NRC in managing the actions
5 in connection with the state's response that you would
6 like to mention?

7 A No. My preoccupation was with the news center,
8 and we have already talked a great deal about my
9 misunderstanding with the Inquirer, and I would not like
10 to go through that.

11 Q You have given us in the interview with
12 Mr. Rubin and Mr. Sandman quite a bit of your thinking
13 with respect to what you learned from the accident. Is
14 there anything you would like to add?

15 A What I learned I am going to put in practice very
16 quickly now.

17 It is my expectation that one day very soon I
18 won't be spending 12-14 hours a day in this office,
19 as I am now, talking to people on the telephone. I
20 have downstairs on my desk Yellow Page Directories
21 from area around every plant in the region, and I am
22 going to go through every plant about setting up a
23 news center, whether the NRC occupies it alone or
24 otherwise -- at every site in a mobile manner for
25 accidents substantially worse than this one, where it

1 will be necessary to evacuate the news center, and expect
2 to have it done by the end of December, and I think if we
3 find the resources -- I am not saying that this is going
4 to be the end-all; other people will look at it and
5 approve it before it is done, but it has to be done
6 because I have operated all my life out of news centers.
7 I have always been on the receiving end, and I am now
8 going to be on the other end, and here it will be flat
9 full up with 500 members of the media and to meet any
10 need they have in a logistics way. It can be done and
11 you have to plan for it and commit the resources. That
12 is a question that remains to be done. It doesn't really
13 matter much who uses it, but I think we will have
14 communications and transcripts and briefing positions
15 and sound systems and be close enough to where a reporter
16 can go buy a ream of paper or where a television camera
17 man can tape his cameras down and all this stuff, and
18 the practical problems can be solved, and we can identify
19 places where you can have news centers. If I can get a
20 little while to do that -- if I can get a few hours every
21 week to work at it, I will get it done by December.

22 Q Unless there is something else you would
23 like to add, we can conclude the deposition.

24 A I would like to make a personal comment. There

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2 probably has not been in recent years a more difficult
3 story for the news media to cover. Considering how
4 little they had to work with most of the time, they
5 did rather well. The few exceptions to that I chalk
6 up mostly to zeal, excessive zeal rather than to any
7 deliberate attempt. I think I know more about how
8 little the news media has to go with than most people,
9 and I understand, I think better than most, some of
10 the misunderstandings that came out of the news reports
11 where most of the fault of people who were discussing
12 things, thinking the report was understood, when in
13 fact they didn't. The fact that that situation became
14 greatly improved when Bennaro and Elsasser came out to
15 the site could explain things that just happened in
16 clear understandable terms, that improved our situation
17 tremendously.

18 I think the misunderstandings that were had and
19 the fluffs on my part and on other people's parts, as
20 well as on the part of the news media, are always to
21 some extent going to be there. You have reporters
22 who were frightened enough to keep worrying about
23 reading their dosimeters miles away from the accident,
24 and worrying whether it is safe to drink or take a
25 shower in the motel rooms. These are people who covered

1
2 revolutions and are not afraid to be shot at, and
3 covered floods, as I have, but they can't see or
4 smell or feel the radiation and don't know where the
5 danger is, and some few reporters reacted enormously
6 to that, and it is only human. If you don't really
7 know what is going on, and when you look at all that, I
8 think that the reporters -- I would expect if we were
9 ever unfortunate enough to have another accident like
10 this will do substantially better. They got a hell of
11 an education. If we don't do substantially better then
12 it won't be for lack of trying because we are definitely
13 going to take steps to do better.

14 I don't think you can honestly say that this was
15 a shining example of planning in public affairs. I think
16 it was pretty bad all the way around because it was a
17 bad accident, and one we have never had before, and never
18 had to do this before, and couldn't give a lot of reasons
19 for why it was so, and some of them are very good reasons,
20 but it doesn't change the facts one bit. It was a bad
21 scene all the way around. Some reporters did real well.
22 They just kept pushing until they found out what they
23 wanted to know and made sure they got accurate facts.
24 Some of the chronologies which were written two or three
25 days after the accident have not changed an awful lot.

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MR. PEARSON: That concludes the deposition.

(Whereupon, at 5:00 p.m., the within deposition was concluded.)

Subscribed and sworn to
before me this ___ day
of _____, 1979.

I N D E XWITNESSDIRECT

Karl Abraham

2

E X H I B I T SABRAHAM DEPOSITION
FOR IDENTIFICATIONPAGE

1	Document entitled "BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION" on Karl Abraham	4
2	Three-page transcript of a portion of a recorded conversation beginning at 9:09 a.m. on March 30, the first page headed "03-259-CH7/25-PD-1"	63
3	Three page transcript of two conversations, one at 9:23 and one at 9:35, the first page headed "03-019-CH 2/20-sw-12."	70
4	Memorandum from Joe Hegner to Karl Abraham dated August 15, 1979, subject: "March 30, 1979 conver- sation between J. Fouchard and K. Abraham," with a transcript attached to the memorandum.	76
5	Witness' handwritten log of tapes	92

oOo

1
2 STATE OF NEW YORK)
3 COUNTY OF NEW YORK) ss:
4

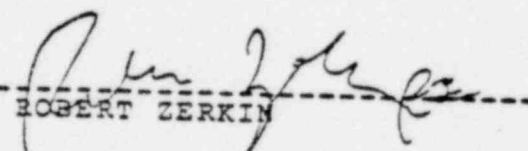
5 I, ROBERT ZERKIN, Notary Public of the
6 State of New York, do hereby certify that the
7 foregoing deposition of the U.S. NUCLEAR
8 REGULATORY COMMISSION, REGION NO. I, by KARL
9 ABRAHAM, was taken before me on the 16th day
10 of August 1979.

11 The said witness was duly sworn before
12 the commencement of his testimony. The said
13 testimony was taken stenographically by myself
14 and then transcribed.

15 The within transcript is a true record
16 of the said deposition.

17 I am not related by blood or marriage to
18 any of the said parties, nor interested directly
19 or indirectly in the matter in controversy; nor
20 am I in the employ of any of the counsel.

21 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
22 my hand this 22nd day of August 1979.

23 
24 ROBERT ZERKIN

25