

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the matter of:
METROPOLITAN-EDISON (TMI II)

Docket No. None

Room D-4
Howard Johnson Motor Inn
473 Eisenhower Boulevard
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Wednesday, September 3, 1980

Interview of Hugh McGovern, began, pursuant to notice,
at 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

TERRY HARPSTER, Office of Inspection and Enforcement
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

JOHN W. CRAIG, Office of Inspection and Enforcement
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

NORMAN C. MOSELEY, Office of Inspection and Enforcement
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

DAVID H. GAMBLE, Office of Inspector and Auditor
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

RICHARD K. HOEFLING, Office of the Executive Legal Director
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

MICHAEL F. McBRIDE, Esq., JANE PENNY, Esq., and

Attorneys for Hugh McGovern

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GAMBLE: We will go on the record.

This interview is being conducted as a portion of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's investigation of the exchange of information between the Metropolitan Edison Company and the NRC on March 28, 1979.

Mr. McGovern, if you would raise your right-hand, I will swear you in.

Whereupon,

HUGH A. McGOVERN

was called for interview and, having first been duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

BY MR. HARPSTER:

Q Hugh, could you tell us briefly at about what time you were in the control room on March 28, 1979?

A I entered the control room at about 10 minutes until seven in the morning. I was there basically all day, until approximately 6:30 or 6:45.

Q What were your duties on March 28, 1979, around the time period 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. ?

A Around 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., I was basically supporting -- I was a control room operator at the time, and I was basically supporting the men who had the duty carrying out functions in the vertical section of the panel.

1 If somebody said, "Open the valve to such and such,"
2 then I took care of that, and that kind of thing. I acted as an
3 extra set of arms.

4 Q Were you on any particular portion of the panel or were
5 you involved in it?

6 A There was not any specific area. It was overall just in
7 that back section panel. By back section, I mean the vertical
8 section behind the horizontal panels.

9 Q Did you briefly recall who was directing you to perform
10 these various evolutions?

11 A Specifics, no, I cannot remember which supervisor was
12 where, and which one said to do this at this time. There were
13 several in the control room.

14 Q Could you briefly recall for us who was present in the
15 control room in that time frame, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m./

16 A I remember Joe Chwastyk and Brian Mehler. I cannot
17 remember who else was in there. There were two foremen, Fred
18 Sheimann and Carl Guthrie.

19 Q Do you recall who was the emergency director at that
20 time?

21 A No.

22 Q Could you describe your recollections or actions at the
23 time of the pressure spike and subsequent to that time?

24 A Yes, sir. I was at the back left portion of the
25 control room, in front of the primary support systems. At the

1 time of the pressure spike, one of the control room operators
2 said that the building spray pumps were running. I walked around
3 the front of the console, to the horizontal section, and in fact
4 I saw the pumps running, and I observed the pressure spike on
5 the recorders, the two recorders on the front.

6 I walked back around to the vertical section, and one
7 of the supervisors or foremen told the control room operator to
8 secure the building spray pumps, and told me to close the DHV-3s,
9 which are the suctions off the sodium hydroxide, and the ~~DSD~~ ^{BSV-1} is
10 when the pumps were off, which is the discharge valve in the
11 reactor building.

12 Q Could you briefly describe, was there a general know-
13 ledge that you had had a pressure spike at that time, and there
14 were a lot of people doing things that were in response to what
15 had happened?

16 A There was ~~not~~ a general knowledge that it indicated a
17 spike up and down. There was a lot of conjecture as to the
18 causes. Yes, people were carrying out various actions. Yes, we
19 had a pressure spike. This was not the first time we had a
20 pressure increase in the reactor building, and we had had one or
21 two building isolations prior to that time.

22 Q Were any explanations given concerning the pressure
23 spike?

24 A I don't remember anybody conjecturing on the cause. I
25 cannot answer that question as far as to what other people were

1 thinking.

2 Q Did you overhear or become involved in any discussions
3 about the pressure spike?

4 A No.

5 BY MR. CRAIG:

6 Q When did you feel that the pressure spike was real?
7 When did you have knowledge or belief that the pressure spike was
8 real?

9 A I think that the actual first time that I realized that
10 we had had a hydrogen explosion, which I believe is what your
11 question is, was on Friday, in the mid-shift.

12 Q Actually, that was not my question.

13 When did you believe the containment spray pumps
14 actuated because of an actual pressure increase in the contain-
15 ment, regardless of the cause?

16 A I knew that we had had a pressure incr-ase, or at least
17 that it indicated an increase. In my mind, I ascribed that to an
18 entirely different circumstance. I felt that we had had an
19 instrument malfunction and some sort of damage in the auxiliary
20 building that had cause that, because that is where the pressure
21 panels are located.

22 Q Can you tell us at what point in time that opinion
23 changed, that belief changed?

24 A Friday morning on the mid-shift. It did not occur to me
25 up until that time that we had actually had a hydrogen burn in

1 the building. This was brought up by somebody else.

2 Q So you are telling us that until you heard the hydrogen
3 explanation, you did not believe that the pressure had been 28
4 pounds, or approximately 30 pounds?

5 A I did not conceive of that being a real possibility.

6 BY MR. HARPSTER:

7 Q Let me ask you. You were a control room operator, is that
8 correct?

9 A Yes.

10 Q How did you account for the spike being an instrument
11 malfunction, with the diversity and redundancy of instrumentation
12 that you have in the control room?

13 A It is a fact that there are four instruments, and they
14 are split up in various locations. I did a little rationaliza-
15 tion in my head, which I thought that maybe we had an electrical
16 transient or something along those lines in the auxiliary
17 building. I based that on a couple of observations that were made
18 at the time,

19 I observed the waste transfer pump, the reactor coolant
20 pumps, the support oil pumps, and the gamma panel, which is a --
21 the gamma monitoring panel which is part of supplying the
22 auxiliary building. All these things are powered off from supplies
23 on the 328 level of the auxiliary building. They all died at the
24 same time as this spike.

25 I made the assumption that we had had an electrical

1 failure, or some sort of mishappening in the upper-level of the
2 auxiliary building, that we had gotten a double series there.
3 There are three panels there, building spray panels. We had two
4 of those three that actually actuated the pumps.

5 Q Could you tell me how that would account for the starting
6 of the containment spray pumps? What are they powered off?

7 A They are powered off of the ^{2-1E} ~~2-1E~~ and ^{2-2E} ~~2-2E~~, which are on
8 the 328 level of the auxiliary building. My thinking was that we
9 had an an electrical failure that had gotten the gamma panel, the
10 support pumps for the ^{reactor} ~~reaction~~ coolant pumps. Some sort of
11 electrical failure, or some sort of electrical transient that
12 caused the pressure instruments to spike.

13 My knowledge is a little more intense in that area now,
14 and I realize that it could not happen that way, but at the time
15 that is what I was thinking.

16 Q Were you aware of anyone, or did you monitor that
17 containment building air temperatures subsequent to the spike?

18 A I did at one or two times during the day.

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SIMONS
for
MINSON
McGovern
9/3/80

300 7TH STREET, S.W., REPORTERS BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024 (202) 554-2345

1 Q Were you aware of anyone or did you monitor the con-
2 tainment building air temperatures subsequent to the spike?

3 A I did it one or two times during the day, but I don't
4 remember if -- at the time of the spike I was not back there. You
5 have to go around, completely around to the back to read those.

6 Q Since you reported on site on March 28th, 1979, have
7 you been influenced to change any of your recollections directly
8 or indirectly?

9 A Could you explain that question. I don't understand
10 what you are getting at. Of course, I have. I mean, you know,
11 there was so much that happened after March the 28th that
12 occurred and it has to have had some sort of influence, but I
13 don't know exactly what you are looking for.

14 Q Well, have you changed any of your recollections since
15 March 28th?

16 A Other than memory fading, I don't think so.

17 Q Do you have any knowledge of pertinent information
18 withheld from the NRC on March 28, 1979?

19 A No, sir.

20 Q On March 28th did you have a feeling that information
21 should not be volunteered to the NRC?

22 A No.

23 Q Did you feel that answering specific questions asked
24 by the NRC fulfilled the reporting requirements?

25 A No, I don't think that that fulfills the requirements

1 by any means. But, on the other hand, the NRC had people come
2 in and talked to people immediately after the accident, well,
3 actually about 40 days after the accident. I believe they took
4 a great deal of information down at that time. We volunteered
5 everything that we could possibly, you know, think of to give
6 them at the time.

7 Q The investigations into the accident on March 28th
8 have identified missing segments of data included in our alarm
9 status printouts at various times on March 28th, the utility
10 typer output and the analog trend recorder strip chart.

11 Can you explain or do you have any idea what happened
12 to this data?

13 A I know at various times the utility typewriter was
14 so tied up, there was so much information coming in, that it was
15 backlogging and continuously typing. At times it would jam
16 and double print and things like that. That might be one possible
17 source of, for instance, a lost time that we didn't see a time on
18 there for a period or something like that. It was definitely
19 overworked.

20 Q Have you been involved in or overheard any conversations
21 with respect to this data?

22 A No.

23 Q Are you aware of any efforts by Met-Ed to locate or
24 explain the disappearance of this data?

25 A No.

3
1 Q Data reflecting the primary system parameters printed
2 out during the day by B&W employees has never been found. Do you
3 have any idea what happened to this data?

4 A I don't know.

5 Q The sheet on which the core exit thermocouples were
6 recorded on the morning of March 28th vanished and did not
7 reappear until May 7th, 1979. Can you explain or do you have any
8 idea what happened to this data?

9 A No. I had nothing to do with it.

10 Q Have you overheard any conversations or been involved
11 in any concerning this data?

12 A No.

13 Q Are you aware of any efforts by Met-Ed to account for
14 the disappearance of this data?

15 A No.

16 MR. GAMBLE: Mr. McGovern, one thing. You indicated
17 what you thought the pressure spike was, the signals and things
18 like that. Were there any different explanations you ever heard
19 from your supervisor, personnel or others? Did anybody have any
20 different feelings?

21 THE WITNESS: No. There were a lot of different groups
22 moving from one side of the control room to the other side of
23 the control room to the shift supervisor's office. I would
24 presume they were discussing what happened here. There was a lot
25 going on. As I said before, my role was basically supporting the

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1 people that were actually involved in trying to control the plant.
2 I didn't have time to sit there and conjecture over different
3 theories of why things occurred. I just made up an idea in my
4 mind about what I thought had occurred. That was the extent of
5 it. I didn't hear any more about it, or, you know, it was just
6 too much happening.

7 MR. GAMBLE: You didn't overhear any of these groups
8 hypothesizing or anything?

9 THE WITNESS: No. As a junior level ^{CRO}~~COO~~, one that
10 had recently finished training and was licensed I wasn't privy
11 to all of the conversations.

12 MR. HARPSTER: Hugh, as we have told you, a part of our
13 job is to try and establish the information flow on that date.
14 Could you tell us, to the best of your recollection, how information
15 into the management people from the operators on the panel in
16 the control room and how directions got back out?

17 THE WITNESS: Through the shift supervisor basically. If
18 an operators was having a problem with a particular parameter or
19 some condition he would call the shift foreman or the shift
20 supervisor over and explain his problem and the shift supervisor
21 would give him directions to do this, that or the other. They
22 also worked the other way where the shift supervisor would go back
23 in the office and then sit there and discuss what they wanted to
24 do, their next steps, and then come back out and give directions
25 to the control room operators.

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1 BY MR. HARPSTER:

2 Q Were you aware of efforts during the afternoon to
3 draw a bubble?

4 A To draw a bubble? I don't remember at the time. Now
5 I don't remember. I know there were a lot of different plans
6 that people were talking about doing this, that or the other. I
7 don't specifically remember drawing a bubble or talking about
8 drawing a bubble.

9 MR. HARPSTER: I believe that will be it.

10 Thank you, Hugh.

11 We will furnish you a copy of the transcript for your
12 review.

13 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, at 9:10 a.m., the interview concluded.)

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

in the matter of:

Metropolitan Edison, TMI II

Date of Proceeding: September 3, 1980

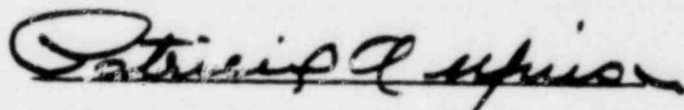
Docket Number: None

Place of Proceeding: Harrisburg, Pa.

were held as herein appears, and that this is the original transcript
thereof for the file of the Commission.

PATRICIA MINSON

Official Reporter (Typed)



Official Reporter (Signature)

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MARY SIMMONS

Official Reporter (Typed)

Mary C. Simmons

Official Reporter (Signature)

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* ADMITTED TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAR

December 9, 1980

Mr. Norman C. Moseley
Director
Division of Reactor Operations
Inspection
Office of Inspection and Enforcement
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Re: NRC Investigation of March 28, 1979
Accident at Three Mile Island - Unit 2

Dear Mr. Moseley:

In response to your letter of September 15, 1980,
the following are transcript corrections to the September
3, 1980 testimony of Mr. Hugh A. McGovern.

PAGE	LINE	WORD(S) THAT NOW APPEAR	CHANGE TO
✓3	16	JoeChwastyk	Insert space between "Joe" and "Chwastyk"
✓4	9	DSB-1S	Change "DSB-1S" to "BSV-1"

PAGE	LINE	WORD(S) THAT NOW APPEAR	CHANGE TO
✓4	16	not	Delete "not"
✓	7	21e and 22e	Change "21e" and "22e" to "2-1e" and "2-2e"
✓	10	reaction	Change "reac- tion" to "reactor"
11	9	COO	Change "COO" to "CRO"

In addition to the statutory witness fee of \$30 per day to which he is entitled, Mr. McGovern is entitled to \$3.20 for a total of 16 miles to and from the interview and hereby requests a total of \$32.20 for his appearance.

Very truly yours,

Harry H. Voigt

cc: Mr. Hugh A. McGovern
Smith B. Gephart, Esq.