

Sept 24, 80

Chairman  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
1717 H St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20055

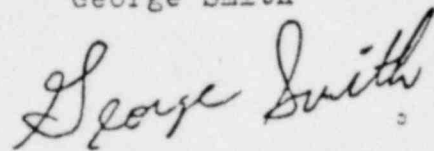
Dear Sir;

In late 1974 while on duty as the unit one Reactor Operator at the Brown's Ferry Nuclear Plant near Athens, Alabama, an alarm sounded indicating high radiation in the off-gas system. I called my immediate supervisor and the shift supervisor and informed them of the alarm. The shift supervisor called the General Electric field representative and they both agreed for some reason which was never revealed to me that the recorder and alarm was in error. The recorder subsequently dropped back to its prior position and resumed recording at below the alarm point. No technician was ever called to check the alarm, recorder, or radiation sensor. No lab technician ever analyzed the off-gas (due to this alarm).

Indications to me was what we had studied as a "Crud Burst" where tramp uranium somewhere on the outside of the fuel is vaporized and removed in the off-gas system. I informed the shift and General Electric supervisors of my suspicions. Since the off-gases were delayed some 30 minutes (at that time) before atmospheric release, the next symptom of a "Crud Burst" would have been high activity in the stack gas. This did occur and was recorded on strip chart recorders and the recordings sent to management the following day.

As far as I know, this incident was never reported to management, and management either did not know enough about the charts to read them accurately or didn't ever look at them. Although this was a reportable incident according to the plant Technical Specifications, it was never reported.

George Smith



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