

ORIGINAL

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Agency: Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Title: Investigative Interview of
Richard A. Parker (CLOSED)

Docket No.

LOCATION: Gore, Oklahmoa

DATE: Tuesday, February 26, 1991

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BEFORE THE

U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:)

INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW OF:)

RICHARD A. PARKER)

(CONFIDENTIAL))

Conference Room

Sequoyah Fuels

Gore, Oklahoma

Tuesday, February 26, 1991

The above-entitled matter convened for
INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW pursuant to notice at 1:37 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

LARRY CHAPMAN, Senior Investigator

Office of Investigations

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Suite 1000, 611 Ryan Plaza

Arlington, Texas 76011

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On behalf of Sequoyah Fuels:

IRA S. SHAPIRO, Attorney
Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam & Roberts
1133 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. CHAPMAN: For the record, this is an interview
3 of Richard L. Parker.

4 MR. PARKER: A.

5 MR. CHAPMAN: Richard A. Parker who is employed by
6 Sequoyah Fuels Corporation, Gore, Oklahoma. The location of
7 this interview is the Sequoyah Fuels Facility, Gore,
8 Oklahoma. The date is February 26, 1991 and the time is 1:20
9 p.m.

10 Present at this interview, in addition to Mr.
11 Parker, is Ira Shapiro who is an attorney from the law firm
12 of Winthrop, Stimson, Putnam and Roberts, Washington, D.C.
13 and is representing Sequoyah Fuels Corporation.

14 Also present at this meeting representing the U.S.
15 Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Investigations is
16 Larry Chapman.

17 Mr. Parker, if you would please stand and raise
18 your right hand.

19 Whereupon,

20 RICHARD A. PARKER

21 appeared as a witness herein, and having been first duly
22 sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

23
24 BY MR. CHAPMAN:

25 Q Mr. Parker, first of all, I would like to get a

1 little bit of background information as to when you came to
2 work at either Sequoyah Fuels or when it was called Kerr
3 McGee.

4 A I was -- I came down here originally on the
5 accident investigation team in January of 1986. I spent
6 approximately seven or eight -- seven plus weeks here on the
7 accident investigation team. I returned to my original
8 position in Wyoming with Kerr McGee and in May of 1986, I
9 came down here on temporary assignment with Kerr McGee to
10 work in the Maintenance Department. In June of 1986, I was
11 transferred here on a permanent basis with Kerr McGee.

12 Q In what position?

13 A Manager of Maintenance.

14 Q Manager of Maintenance?

15 A (Nodding head affirmatively.)

16 Q Are you still currently holding that position with
17 Sequoyah Fuels now?

18 A I am the Operations Manager and I also have --
19 oversee the maintenance function with consultants.

20 Q When did you assume the position of Operations
21 Manager?

22 A January 18, 1991.

23 Q January 18, 1991?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Back when our discussion was held on September 7,

1 1990, then your position would have been Manager of
2 Maintenance --

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q -- with Sequoyah Fuels Corporation here in Gore?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q Mr. Parker, during our conversation of September 7,
7 1990, we centered our discussion on a management meeting that
8 had taken place here on August the 7th, a Tuesday morning
9 staff meeting. Do you recall our discussions about that?

10 A I don't remember what date the staff meeting was,
11 but I remember we did talk about a staff meeting.

12 Q Okay. Well for the record, we discussed
13 specifically an August 7th staff meeting.

14 A Okay.

15 Q In that meeting, you indicated to me that an issue
16 was brought up by Ronald Atkinson of contaminated water being
17 in the excavation pit adjacent to the solvent extraction
18 building, commonly referred to as the SX excavation.

19 A I don't remember who brought the subject up at this
20 time.

21 Q Do you recall it being discussed during that
22 meeting?

23 A If that's what we discussed. I remember discussing
24 it with you as of August the 7th.

25 Q Keep in mind that we're not trying --

1 A Yeah. I'm just --

2 Q I'm just going over these facts as they were
3 relayed to me back then.

4 A Okay.

5 Q Well, let me go on then. I'll say that also as
6 you've stated you recalled the issue of the water being
7 contaminated was brought out -- brought up without any
8 specific results being discussed. Only that you do recall
9 there was discussion that the water was contaminated in the
10 SX area -- in the pit itself. You also indicated that it was
11 brought up possibly -- the initial issue was brought up
12 possibly by Carolyn Couch or Sam Fryer somewhere toward the
13 end of that meeting. Do you still agree with those facts
14 or...

15 A If that's what I said. I don't really recall what
16 exactly -- who brought it up. I remember the discussion. I
17 remember Carol and Ron in some discussion of contaminated
18 liquids -- at least, it appeared to be contaminated water in
19 that excavation. Who brought it up and who talked about it,
20 I don't really recall.

21 Q Okay. But for the record, you do recall that in
22 this meeting there was a discussion of contaminated water in
23 that area?

24 A It was either the 7th or 14th staff meeting. I
25 can't -- if it was the 7th we talked about, then it was the

1 7th.

2 Q All right, sir. Also, you indicated that Michael
3 Nichols was also present at that meeting --

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q -- and was privy to the discussion that was being
6 held at this meeting, correct?

7 A Right.

8 Q Also, you indicated to me that both Nichols and
9 Couch were expressing some concern during this meeting about
10 the water being contaminated in the pit. They did not give
11 you specifics, but there was just a general discussion, yes,
12 the water is contaminated and we are concerned about it.

13 A As I recall.

14 Q Is there any other personnel that you can recall at
15 that meeting, or do you have any additional information
16 regarding that meeting?

17 A No. I really can't recall who was there. One of
18 the problems I have in recalling who may have been there is
19 that I've read reports about what occurred since then. It
20 makes it a little bit blurry about what I -- what dates. You
21 know, you say August 7th. I -- I know it occurred on either
22 August 7th or the 14th, but I can't remember what exact
23 meeting it was.

24 Q Well, I do know that we never discussed the 14th
25 meeting.

1 A Well, then, that's --

2 MR. SHAPIRO: Larry, I think you said it before,
3 but for the record, your earlier conversation with Mr. Parker
4 was what date?

5 MR. CHAPMAN: September 7, 1990.

6 BY MR. CHAPMAN:

7 Q If you can focus in on this meeting and try to put
8 your thinking cap on a little bit; one of the things that was
9 discussed with you was, after the meeting was held, Donald
10 Knoke -- who was in charge of the Process Laboratory here at
11 Sequoyah Fuels -- went to his laboratory and looked up some
12 results. Mr. Knoke has indicated to me that he returned to
13 the room where the meeting was held and that you were still
14 present --

15 A Yes.

16 Q -- along with some others who -- there seems to be
17 some discussion who they were. But, at least, you were
18 present. And he made a comment, "That amount of
19 contamination that we were discussing during the meeting is
20 about three grams per liter." Do you recall him returning
21 and making such a statement?

22 A I remember him returning to the meeting. I don't
23 remember what the grams per liter was.

24 Q Do you recall him making a pronouncement of grams
25 per liter?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Some number --

3 A Right.

4 Q -- but the exact number is unknown?

5 A Right.

6 Q Also, during our September 7th discussion, you
7 indicated that when Knoke returned, you believed that
8 Atkinson and Lee Lacy were still present upon Knoke's return?

9 A I think Lee was just leaving but I Ron and I were --
10 - it must have been Ron and I, if that's what I said. There
11 may have been somebody else but I don't remember. It was
12 just right at the end of the meeting. I remember because Don
13 left the meeting to try and find the results that people had
14 mentioned something about. He came back and most people had
15 left already.

16 Q Do you recall when Mr. Knoke left? Did he make any
17 pronouncement that he was going to get these laboratory
18 results, or did he give any general comments about I'm going
19 to see if I can determine what these are?

20 A Yeah, I'm pretty sure that's what he said.
21 Something like that because he left kind of fast. He said,
22 "Well, I'm going to see", you know, "what kind of results
23 there were." Something to that effect. I remember him
24 leaving then.

25 Q Without getting into any time frames, was it fairly

1 shortly that he returned? Like the meeting was over, and
2 say, within a few minutes, did Mr. Knoke return because there
3 were still folks lingering around, I guess?

4 A Yeah, there were a few lingering around. It would
5 have been a fairly short period. It could have been within
6 five minutes.

7 Q Do you recall after the official meeting was so
8 called terminated or closed, was there some discussion among
9 the folks still there of this contamination, or was there a
10 different subject being discussed?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q Okay. After our meeting on the 7th -- immediately
13 after our meeting on the 7th, did you hold any discussions
14 with anyone else that might have clarified any of your
15 memory? When I say immediately, I'm not talking -- within
16 that week frame because I realize since then there's been a
17 tremendous amount of discussion about this subject. Or did
18 you receive any information that would solidify your
19 participation in that meeting?

20 A I remember I asked Don if it was at that August 7th
21 meeting and he thought it was the 14th -- I thought he said.
22 He wasn't sure what -- I thought it was at the August 7th
23 meeting that it was brought up. There was some discussion
24 about what time frames we were looking at.

25 Q So basically, you're -- what you're telling me is

1 there has been nothing new?

2 A Nothing that I know of.

3 Q Okay. Just the general information --

4 A I haven't been too involved, other than reading the
5 reports that come out from it.

6 Q All right, sir.

7 A I do remember that Don was concerned about that
8 number. He thought it was extremely high. Some number had
9 come out and that's why he went back to the lab.

10 Q Did you -- do you recall if a number was given --

11 A No.

12 Q No. Do you recall if a number was given, did it
13 raise any concern with you? Did that number trigger in your
14 mind that there was some high readings out there?

15 A No. Not -- I guess, I was concerned from the
16 standpoint of other people showed some concern about it. It
17 said that the numbers in that range would have been too high
18 to expect.

19 Q But you had no personal immediate concern is what I
20 -- enough that it drove you somewhere else to talk to someone
21 else and bring up an issue of it?

22 A No. Actually Don was schooling me on the number,
23 as far as I can recall. I mean, I can't --

24 Q I understand.

25 A There's been a lot of discussions about this.

1 Q I understand that and that's why I'm trying as much
2 as I can to limit it to this time frame --

3 A Yes.

4 Q -- and trying to leave all of these other
5 discussions because there has been a lot --

6 A You know, I --

7 Q I realize it all --

8 A I know numbers pretty well right now, and in what
9 time frame I learned those numbers --

10 Q That's why I'm not trying to pin you down on
11 specific numbers but just to find out if your feeling was,
12 yes, there should be concern or just try to get your mindset
13 at that time.

14 A I guess, I would say I was concerned because a
15 number was brought up that -- and I don't know if it was a
16 specific number, but someone said there may be a
17 contamination problem there and I was as concerned as anybody
18 else would have been around the table saying we have a
19 problem and we need to look at it. I mean, that's the only
20 standpoint. I didn't know what the numbers were. I wouldn't
21 be in the reporting system for the numbers regarding that. I
22 really would not have known too much about numbers at all at
23 that time.

24 Q All right. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cut you
25 off.

1 A No, that's...

2 Q Just for clarification purposes so that I don't get
3 too far away from it; does this meeting usually take place in
4 the morning?

5 A Tuesday mornings at 8:30?

6 Q 8:30?

7 A (Nodding head affirmatively.)

8 Q Their duration is an hour or so usually?

9 A Anywhere from a half hour -- 20 minutes to an hour.
10 It depends on what the subjects are.

11 Q So we would be fairly safe to say -- well, I
12 started to say we would be safe to say that Don came back
13 within an hour but that wouldn't be true because the meeting
14 would have broken up and he would have been --

15 A Well, he was back within an hour from the meeting -
16 -

17 QQ Oh, yeah, I'm sure of that.

18 A -- after the meeting broke up.

19 Q Do you have any -- in the Maintenance Department,
20 did you have any knowledge prior to the excavation being
21 started of possible soil contamination out there in the area
22 immediately adjacent to the SX building to the north?

23 A No, sir.

24 Q Were you aware of any past spills or overflows of
25 the so called dump tank which flowed out onto the ground?

1 A No.

2 Q Would you department have been called to do any
3 maintenance repairs of broken flanges or anything of
4 importance that you recall about those tanks before they were
5 unearthed?

6 A (No response.)

7 Q Did I get you lost with my question?

8 A Yeah.

9 Q What I was trying to determine is, prior to the
10 actual digging of these tanks up, I understand that in some
11 years previous, they had overflowed on occasions. There had
12 been broken valves on these tanks or flanges or something.
13 I'm not sure of the terminology. And I was just wondering if
14 you had any major maintenance out there on these two tanks?

15 A Not that I had known of.

16 Q Okay. Were you privy to any soil samples or any
17 information regarding soil samples taken on that ground?

18 A No.

19 Q You, yourself, would not have taken soil samples --

20 A No, sir.

21 Q -- in the course of your normal duties?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay. In your capacity in the Maintenance
24 Department, did you supply any personnel to assist in pumping
25 water from this excavation once it was discovered?

1 A Not to my knowledge.

2 Q Were you requested to furnish any equipment, be it
3 barrels, be it pumps, be it any type of technical support?

4 A I was not requested. That doesn't mean that we
5 wouldn't have had mechanics on-shift that would have worked
6 for the supervisor on-shift. No one come to me and said I
7 needed to provide equipment and whatever so I can pump out
8 this.

9 Q All right. My next question is, do you have any
10 knowledge of any maintenance personnel being requested to be
11 out there?

12 A No. We did some original preparation work on some
13 piping racks up above.

14 Q But you had no direct involvement in the actual
15 excavation --

16 A No.

17 Q -- or fault --

18 A No, that was strictly a contractor's job.

19 Q Okay.

20 A That's not to say that there may not be people in
21 my department that were saying can you bring something to me
22 or whatever. But that wouldn't have been a request to me.

23 Q Right. But limiting it to you, you had no official
24 request by Sequoyah Fuels to take action?

25 A No, sir.

1 MR. CHAPMAN: Okay, basically, I don't have any
2 additional information that I need to seek from you. I just
3 want to give you an opportunity -- if you have anything you
4 wish to add or any comments you want to make, feel free to
5 make them.

6 THE WITNESS: The only comment I can is, I feel
7 somewhat confused because of everything I've read since our
8 meeting. In trying to reconstruct what went on in my own
9 mind, it's certainly hard to say what I've read and what I
10 recall.

11 MR. CHAPMAN: Okay.

12 THE WITNESS: But if you have something that I've
13 said, I wouldn't have reason to change that.

14 MR. CHAPMAN: Well, I can assure you that this
15 information was brought down to paper immediately --

16 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

17 MR. CHAPMAN: -- or as soon as possible after.

18 Mr. Parker, have I or any other NRC representative
19 threatened you in any manner or offered you any reward in
20 return for this statement?

21 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

22 MR. CHAPMAN: Have you given this statement freely
23 and voluntarily?

24 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

25 MR. CHAPMAN: Is there anything further you care to

1 add to the record?

2 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

3 MR. CHAPMAN: The time is now 1:55 p.m. and this
4 interview is closed.

5 (Whereupon, the interview was closed at 1:55 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the attached proceedings before the
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the matter of:

Name: Interview of Richard A. Parker

Docket Number:

Place: Sequoyah Fuels Corporation, Gore, Oklahoma

Date: February 26, 1991

were held as herein appears, and that this is the original
transcript thereof for the file of the United States Nuclear
Regulatory Commission taken stenographically by me and,
thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my
direction, and that the transcript is a true and accurate
record of the foregoing proceedings.



WILLIAM L. WARREN

Official Reporter

Ann Riley & Associates

ake place in the morning?

A Tuesday mornings at 8:30?