



UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
DIVISION OF COMPLIANCE
REGION V
2111 BANCROFT WAY
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94704

TELEPHONE 841-8121
EXT. 151

June 1, 1970

Memo to File

TELEPHONE CALL FROM JAY CARROLL - PG&E

On May 27, 1970, I received a telephone call from Jay Carroll, PG&E San Francisco offices. He said he wanted to give me some information on a personnel problem that had developed at the Humboldt reactor. The following is the substance of the information Mr. Carroll related to me.

He said there were two Control Technicians at the reactor who were giving the company problems. He said both were full time employees but were also part time students at College of the Redwoods near Eureka. Both are in their late 20's and are the "activist" type both at work and on the campus.

The current problem is with one of these employees named Forrest Williams. This employee has been suspended four times for periods of 1 to 5 days each in the last four months. The reason for the suspensions was insubordination, which Carroll said involved the employee's refusal to expose himself to radiation in his employment. The employee's position seemed to be that PG&E was not doing everything practicable to keep his exposure to a minimum. In answer to my questions Mr. Carroll said the work in question was a sampling operation which involved a dose of about 10 mrem per sample and 3 samples per week were required. Mr. Carroll said the Control Technicians did receive the highest exposure of anyone in the plant, and received about 4 rem per year total dose. Mr. Carroll said many things had been done over the years to lower exposures, and added that the complaining employee had no suggestions for lowering exposure.

Following the last suspension of Mr. Williams (back to work on Monday May 18 77) he refused to work in the Chemistry Lab on the basis that he had a seed wart removed from one finger during the previous week, and the area was not yet completely healed. After examination of the finger by the PG&E Health Physicist, Williams was assigned to other work for the week.

Sometime during this period Williams and the other Control Technician (named Rowan) read prepared statements to the employees at the reactor during a regular safety meeting. These statements included questions

like "Does PG&E recognize that ionizing radiation is one of the most effective carcinogens known?" and also included the accusation that PG&E management had deliberately set the alarm points higher on the hand and foot counters during the last reactor outage. This supposedly was done to avoid detection of contamination and subsequent embarrassment of management and to speed up the flow of personnel in and out of the radiation area. Carroll said the alarm points had not been changed.

After a week on another assignment, Williams was again assigned to work in the Chemistry Lab. Again he refused because of the wart removal. The finger area was examined by the PG&E Health Physicist, and pronounced acceptable for radiation area work. However, PG&E offered to place an impervious protection over the area if Williams wished. This would be in addition to the two pair of gloves which would normally be required for the work. Williams still refused to work. He was taken to a physician in Eureka whose opinion was that the area would have healed sufficiently within 24 to 48 hours after the wart removal to preclude absorption of radioactive material through the site. The examination by the physician was about 1½ weeks after removal of the wart. Williams still refused to accept the assignment and was fired.

Off the record, Carroll told me that PG&E security has made an investigation of these two individuals. Reportedly, both are active in the SDS movement and other militant groups at College of the Redwoods and one had been heard to threaten to burn the college down. In answer to my question, Carroll said they did not consider either of the men to be a direct threat to the safety of the plant.

After this lengthy background discussion, Carroll said he had two basic reasons for calling. First, he said PG&E upper management had been informed of the circumstances of the firing and the security investigation. He said they had asked the question "Is PG&E doing everything practicable to reduce radiation exposure?" With this in mind Carroll asked me, if in my experience, I felt their handling of the situation was in agreement with standard accepted practice.

I told Carroll that procedures and practices varied, but that in many facilities it was accepted practice to cover minor cuts and abrasions with impervious dressings and proceed with normal radiation work assignments. Therefore, I told him that in my opinion they handled the matter of the removed wart in a conservative manner. I told him I could not comment on the matter of lowest practicable exposure, since this usually involves a management decision and expenditure of money. I told him that the AEC was just beginning to get involved in this concept with the new amendment to part 20, which I believed applied to exposure of radiation workers as well as to release of effluents. I said that in the past, however, we had no problems at their plant with what we considered excessive exposures or noncompliance in the radiation exposure of personnel. (Note: There was one overexposure situation at this plant a few years ago involving a temporary employee).

Carroll said the second reason he called was that there was a good possibility that Williams would place a complaint with the AEC and He (Carroll) thought we should have some of the background if this occurred. I told Mr. Carroll that if this happened the AEC would probably conduct an independent investigation. Mr. Carroll said PG&E would welcome such an investigation.

As an interesting sidelight, Carroll said their contract with the union prohibited employees from complaining to the AEC. I told him I thought that was in conflict with our regulations which required posting of Form AEC-3 and encouraged radiation workers to come to the AEC if they had problems or complaints.

Carroll said they expected only a token objection from the union over the firing because these two individuals were unpopular with other employees and with union officials.

I thanked Mr. Carroll for the information, and told him it would be helpful if we received a complaint from the employee or the union. Mr. Carroll said he was going to write a memo to file recording our conversation.

Herbert E. Book

Herbert E. Book
Senior Radiation Specialist

CO:V:HEB

cc: R. H. Engelken, CO:HQ



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EXHIBIT A

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