

46-4A

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Agency: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Title: INTERVIEW OF: STEVE CHESNUT

Docket No.

LOCATION: WAYNESBORO, GEORGIA

DATE: MARCH 28, 1990

PAGES: 1 - 22

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U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

INTERVIEW OF:

STEVE CHESNUT

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Main Conference Room
Administration Building
Vogtle Electric Generating Plant
Waynesboro, Georgia

Wednesday, March 28, 1990

The interview commenced at 5:07 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

On behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission:

WILLIAM LAZARUS
WARREN LYON
AL CHAFFEE
GENE TRAGER
RICK KENDALL
BILL JONES

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PROCEEDINGS

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2 MR. LYON: This is the IIT Team investigating the
3 event of the 20th. It is presently March 28th, the time is
4 5:07 p.m.

5 BY MR. LYON:

6 Q Steve, would you state your name please for the
7 record and your position?

8 A My name is Steven H. Chesnut. I am an employee of
9 Georgia Power Company working at Plant Vogtle and my current
10 title is manager in training.

11 Q Would you describe for us where you were at the
12 time this event initiated and then just kind of walk us
13 through the activities that you were involved in during the
14 event?

15 A Certainly. I was in the Clearance and Tagging
16 Office just outside of the control room when I heard the
17 announcement that Unit 2 had tripped. I proceeded into the
18 control room to offer assistance. I saw that there was
19 plenty going on in the control room. They were carrying out
20 their immediate actions and I went over to Unit 1 control
21 room and observed the conditions that were going on in the
22 control room and had been there about two minutes -- maybe
23 two to five minutes, when the operations supervisor and the
24 operations manager who was in the control room, identified
25 me to go and close the containment equipment hatch.

1 I left the control room with one plant equipment
2 operator, ran to the maintenance shop to get maintenance
3 support staff to help me make sure the equipment hatch was
4 closed. I got there and met David Seckinger who had been in
5 charge of other maintenance operations of this sort --

6 Q Excuse me. Would you spell that name for us,
7 please?

8 A Seckinger, S-e-c-k-i-n-g-e-r.

9 Q Thank you.

10 A He identified four maintenance employees to come
11 with us. One who could operate the polar crane, if
12 necessary, and three other maintenance workers. We
13 proceeded to go get the equipment hatch put into place.

14 I sent my PEO, my equipment operator and two of the
15 maintenance employees into the containment. They went and
16 dressed out and proceeded into the containment. I went
17 around the outside to the outside portion with David
18 Seckinger and one of the other equipment operators because
19 we knew the biggest impediment to closing the equipment
20 hatch would be to remove the interference in order to get
21 the equipment hatch shut.

22 So we got there, got the other work in progress
23 moved aside, started the effort to clear the interference.
24 There was a lot of equipment that was in the hatch area.
25 There was the portable railway, the railway cart, there was

1 a large amount of scaffolding in the area. I think probably
2 a welding machine was in the area that needed to be taken
3 out of the area in order to get the equipment hatch shut. A
4 lot of this equipment was in the process of being removed
5 anyway. For example, the scaffolding was being disassembled
6 and pulled out of containment as work was being finished, so
7 it was broken down in parts and all of the individual bars
8 were sort of in the area waiting to get removed.

9 I got the portable crane there to remove the
10 equipment. It rolled in --

11 Q Do you mean the polar crane or...

12 A The portable crane outside, just outside the
13 containment. I got the portable crane in there to pull out
14 all of the scaffolding material. There were probably in
15 excess of 50 bars that were used to make up the scaffolding.
16 I got, you know, a sling and put around them and got those
17 pieces removed. I got the equipment that was blocking the
18 railway so we could roll the cart all the way back, and then
19 to disassemble the railroad track --

20 Q There was a railroad going through the equipment -

21 -

22 A Yes, to carry equipment in and out.

23 Q Oh.

24 A So it had to be unbolted, the railway cart moved
25 away. The crane had to pick up the railroad track and also

1 the --

2 Q Is this regular railroad track?

3 A Yes. It's fastened just like regular railroad
4 track. It has some cross pieces on it but it's not the big
5 wooden pieces that you see, but the actual rails look
6 identical to a railroad track that you would see.

7 MR. CHAFFEE: How big is this cart that goes on it?

8 THE WITNESS: The cart is probably a little bit
9 bigger than one of these tables.

10 MR. CHAFFEE: It's a low type?

11 THE WITNESS: Yes.

12 MR. CHAFFEE: Okay.

13 THE WITNESS: So we got that pushed back, got the
14 cart pulled back, lifted the railroad track. We used a lot
15 of the -- there were several iron workers that were in the
16 area, got them to help us.

17 During this time, I heard the site area emergency
18 announced and I -- there was some other work activity that
19 was going on in the vicinity. I told the people who were
20 not working with me closing the hatch to report to their
21 shop area to await further instructions. So -- then I
22 stayed there -- I called the control room and told them I
23 was staying out here to close the hatch or had -- I told
24 the security guard who was there to call CAS to tell the
25 control room. We stayed there and completed the job. My

1 PEO -- I stayed there until all of the interference was
2 removed and I saw the hatch starting to be lowered into
3 place.

4 Once everything was removed there was nothing to be
5 done on the outside. The work remaining was to be done on
6 the inside. So then I left and reported to the control
7 room and told them that the hatch was coming closed. I left
8 instructions with the maintenance personnel to insure that
9 they got the personnel airlock going. I had someone --
10 while this was going on, I had someone waiting at the
11 personnel airlock -- because I knew a lot of people were
12 going to be coming in and out of the containment, to make
13 sure that when they got the interlocks restored to the
14 personnel interlock and that that got properly secured.

15 I reported back to the control room and my time
16 recollection -- I don't have the log with me but it seemed
17 like it was approximately 20 till 10, something of that
18 nature. I remember hearing shortly thereafter that the
19 airlock was in place and bolted and then --

20 MR. LYON: Excuse me. The airlock or the equipment
21 hatch?

22 THE WITNESS: The equipment hatch. Excuse me. The
23 equipment hatch was in place and was bolted.

24 MR. CHAFFEE: Did you say something like around 20
25 of 10 or after 10?

1 THE WITNESS: It was approximately 20 till 10.

2 MR. CHAFFEE: Is that Eastern time or Central time?

3 (Pause.)

4 THE WITNESS: I -- I'll have to look -- to be
5 honest, I'll have to go back and look at the events.

6 MR. CHAFFEE: Can you tell me this, about how long
7 was it after the event started?

8 THE WITNESS: It seems like it was -- it was
9 probably -- it seems to me like it was around an hour after
10 the event happened that I got the report -- I reported back
11 well before an hour, 20 -- you know, 15 minutes or so before
12 an hour was up and then it seemed like about an hour later
13 that the hatch was bolted or maybe just over an hour. I'm
14 not sure. I could look at the logs and give you those
15 times.

16 MR. CHAFFEE: I think it was like an hour and 20
17 minutes --

18 THE WITNESS: And hour and 20 -- okay, an hour and
19 --

20 MR. CHAFFEE: -- after the event.

21 THE WITNESS: -- 20 minutes. Then that would be
22 the time. You see, the event occurred at...

23 MR. CHAFFEE: It was 9:20 --

24 THE WITNESS: 9:20 --

25 MR. CHAFFEE: -- Eastern time.

1 THE WITNESS: Okay then, so 8:20. So it was
2 probably 20 till 10 control room time because I was in the
3 control room when I got the report back.

4 MR. CHAFFEE: So control room time is Central time?

5 THE WITNESS: Yes, the control room is on Central
6 time.

7 MR. CHAFFEE: So that would be 20 till 11 Eastern
8 time?

9 THE WITNESS: I believe so, yes.

10 I had been back in the control room for a period of
11 time and I reported to the control room that it was coming
12 down and I had left instructions to make sure that the
13 personnel airlock was secured. Then I assisted by manning
14 the communications loop between the TSC and the EOF in the
15 control room.

16 MR. CHAFFEE: Did you in your role of manning the
17 phone between the TSC and the EOF, did you receive any
18 communications from the EOF relative to problems with
19 notifications being made to what is called GEMA, I think it
20 is. Georgia Emergency...

21 THE WITNESS: I don't recall that being over EOF.
22 I do recall someone saying that GEMA -- said they had been
23 notified right away. I believe that was from inside the
24 control room not from the EOF.

25 MR. CHAFFEE: I missed it but are you a: RO, SRO?

1 THE WITNESS: I'm an SRO. I was just licensed
2 about three weeks ago.

3 MR. CHAFFEE: Oh. And what is your position?

4 THE WITNESS: My title is called manager in
5 training. I was the engineering manager in Birmingham and
6 about a year ago they identified five managers in the plant
7 who they desired to get SRO training. So they pulled us off
8 our regular jobs and replaced us with other people and then
9 after we serve a period of various functions, apprenticeship
10 type jobs, some of us in the control room and other jobs, we
11 will be assigned permanent positions back as managers
12 somewhere in the plant.

13 MR. CHAFFEE: So the day of the event, you -- how
14 did you find your way into the containment to conduct all of
15 these activities relative to the equipment hatch?

16 THE WITNESS: Well, I -- I stayed outside the
17 containment. I was -- I was outside. I was carrying out
18 some other duties that put me in Clearance and Tagging which
19 is just outside the control room and when I heard the Unit 2
20 trip announcement, I went there to be available to provide
21 assistance if they needed any help and that's how I was
22 identified to do the containment.

23 MR. CHAFFEE: So they asked you to go out and do
24 that?

25 THE WITNESS: Yes.

1 MR. CHAFFEE: So you were asked to clear the -- to
2 get the equipment hatch shut?

3 THE WITNESS: Yes.

4 BY MR. LYON:

5 Q When you were handling all this stuff outside, it
6 sounds to me like there was quite a bit of stuff in the way.
7 And you said you got some extra hands from some iron workers
8 in the vicinity.

9 A Yes.

10 Q How much longer would it have taken, in your
11 judgment, if those people hadn't been around?

12 A I don't think it would have taken that much because
13 the vast majority of the work was really done by the crane.
14 We had the crane fairly close to the vicinity anyway, it was
15 within 100 yards when we started.

16 Q Excuse me. This is a gasoline powered, self-
17 propelled crane -- Diesel?

18 A Diesel crane.

19 Q Okay.

20 A I don't know if you've been outside in the turbine
21 alley where you see that crane is operating there --

22 MR. CHAFFEE: Like a 50 foot crane or something?

23 THE WITNESS: Yes.

24 MR. CHAFFEE: Is there always a crane operator on
25 site to be able to operate it?

1 THE WITNESS: I believe during an outage yes, we
2 have so much work going on, it's --

3 MR. CHAFFEE: 24 hours a day, do you know that?

4 THE WITNESS: It's my impression that it is, yes.

5 MR. B. JONES: Steve, would that crane be in the
6 area normally?

7 THE WITNESS: During outage -- this is only the
8 second outage that I've observed and it has always been here
9 and it's a Georgia Power owned crane.

10 BY MR. LYON:

11 Q But would it be right in the vicinity of the
12 equipment hatch or could it be off some other place in the
13 plant doing something else?

14 A To be honest, I don't know.

15 Q Those are the easy ones to answer.

16 A I couldn't tell you how many cranes there are. For
17 example, I saw a crane very similar to it operating about
18 the circ water screen today, very similar to that one and
19 whether that's a rented one or Georgia Power owned or -- I
20 believe that Georgia Power is committed to get that hatch
21 shut. If I were to guess, that is there in the vicinity to
22 do this work, but I can't certify that.

23 Q I understand.

24 MR. CHAFFEE: Did you call the crane guy to come or
25 did someone go and get it or it just was coming or --

1 THE WITNESS: I think David Seckinger waved it over
2 -- David Seckinger, who was with me.

3 MR. CHAFFEE: Who is David Seckinger?

4 THE WITNESS: He's one of the maintenance -- he was
5 a fellow from the Maintenance Department who I got, he's a
6 maintenance supervisor.

7 MR. CHAFFEE: Oh, so the two of you came out to the
8 area?

9 THE WITNESS: Well when I was headed to the control
10 room, I knew -- I had previously talked to him about the
11 containment hatch, earlier, on a separate issue when we were
12 going into Mode 6 and I knew that he had been charged with
13 tasking that. I went and got him and the maintenance
14 support we needed to make it happen.

15 MR. CHAFFEE: Oh, you had known that he had
16 previously done some work with that?

17 THE WITNESS: Yes.

18 MR. CHAFFEE: I think I heard most of the stuff that
19 was out there but it was all stuff that was outside the
20 containment -- I think that you talked about that. Is that
21 normally what they do, they move the stuff out and let it
22 sit there until -- or do you know what the --

23 THE WITNESS: They normally don't keep this thing
24 impeded. Equipment comes in and out. Okay? And they've
25 got like a little shelter area which comes out there if

1 something is staged in the area, but usually you don't keep
2 things blocking the hatch. With the exception of the
3 railway car which is there just to expedite equipment in and
4 out.

5 MR. CHAFFEE: Was equipment actually in the way of
6 the hatch other than the -- or was it blocking the way to
7 get in the --

8 THE WITNESS: Well some of it was on the railroad
9 tracks and the railroad tracks were in the way of getting
10 the hatch shut.

11 MR. CHAFFEE: Oh, I see.

12 THE WITNESS: I could probably draw it if you'd like
13 but it would be essentially -- probably very little
14 equipment was actually in the hatch with the exception of
15 the plate that went across between the big area there and
16 then the actual track.

17 MR. CHAFFEE: I see.

18 THE WITNESS: But to get the track out there were
19 doors, the scaffolding was sitting on the track, the cart
20 was sitting on the track and there might have been some
21 stuff inside the containment that would have impeded a swift
22 move, but the critical path was getting the railroad cart
23 out of the way and that was what we focused on.

24 MR. CHAFFEE: Do you have any idea how long the
25 equipment hatch was open? Not just in the event but days

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1 earlier or do you have any idea?

2 THE WITNESS: It was open -- I don't know exactly,
3 I'm really not sure.

4 BY MR. LYON:

5 Q The rails themselves, do they require the crane?

6 A It could be done without it probably, but it would
7 take several people to do it.

8 Q And the plate that covers that sort of trench that
9 the hatch goes down into --

10 A That would take a crane of some sort, that would
11 take a portable crane or at least some sort of chain fall,
12 some hoist or something to make that happen.

13 Q Did any of these activities getting all this
14 interference out of the way hold up the hatch closure, did
15 they have to wait for you to finish that or were they busy
16 doing things inside and -- which of you was ready for
17 closure first, the inside people or you folks outside?

18 A Outside.

19 Q So you were ready first.

20 A No. The outside people, where I was, were the ones
21 that held it up.

22 Q Okay, I didn't ask it well, I'm sorry.

23 A Yes, the hatch -- it was just a matter of minutes
24 before the people there were waiting and they had to pull
25 the crane on standby and all other work stopped. We didn't

1 need the crane operator that I sent in there, we had another
2 polar crane operator who was already in there.

3 Q And he was up in the crane at the time?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Do you know --

6 A His work stopped and our work started.

7 Q Do you know where the crane was located at the time
8 activity started?

9 A I do not.

10 Q Okay. Did you observe any of the rigging and so
11 forth that one would use to maneuver the hatch and hook it
12 to the polar crane?

13 A No, I didn't see that.

14 Q Who was the individual in charge of inside
15 containment, to handle the closure?

16 A We had the two maintenance people and Jay Clifton
17 who was the plant equipment operator who I sent in, and --
18 but there were some other people in the containment and I
19 suspect that they chipped in to make it happen.

20 MR. CHAFFEE: But you were in charge of getting the
21 equipment hatch shut and you actually sent the people inside
22 containment to make sure they could do it?

23 THE WITNESS: Yes.

24 BY MR. LYON:

25 Q So normally, the person that was in charge in the

1 inside team that you sent in would have been Jay?

2 A Yes, but we were in communication with each other,
3 had there been a problem and I needed some resources I could
4 have gotten it. There was an operations interface in case
5 something had to be handled and there was an individual who
6 was a qualified crane operator who went with us. There
7 wasn't a supervisor that we sent in to direct that portion
8 of it.

9 Q Who would you recommend that we talk with to get a
10 picture of what went on inside containment?

11 A Well, I'm going to be a little wishy-washy -- David
12 Seckinger might know -- he spent a lot more time up close
13 right at the hatch interface than I did.

14 Q I'm sorry, I'd asked you to spell a name before, was
15 that what I had asked you?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay.

18 A Some of the -- what they call the core group of
19 people were in there and I think some fellow you're already
20 scheduled to talk to might be able to give you some
21 additional information. That's Mike Cagle.

22 Q Okay.

23 A Might be able to provide some assistance because he
24 was involved. There were several jobs that were going on.

25 MR. TRAGER: He's listed in containment.

1 THE WITNESS: He was in containment and he was
2 really focusing his efforts in getting the other items
3 buttoned up, but I think he was in communications with his
4 people since his people were operating the crane and other
5 systems.

6 BY MR. LYON:

7 Q Had you been needed before the crane came down,
8 could you have gone inside containment?

9 A Well --

10 Q I'm sorry, before the hatch came down.

11 A Not really. I'd have to be dressed out.

12 Q Were people in plastics or just --

13 A They're just in PC's.

14 Q Okay.

15 A People were in there. I could have dressed out and
16 gotten in there but it would have taken me five or ten
17 minutes to get in there.

18 Q I see. But you could have provided guidance from
19 outside until it was all the way down.

20 A Yes. Were there any problems, and I could see that
21 really there was plenty -- there were people on hand,
22 maintenance people, who were already involved there.

23 Q Could you describe what kinds of operations are
24 necessary to close the hatch from inside?

25 A To be honest, I can't give you the details on it,

1 I've never actually watched it done from the inside.

2 Q Okay.

3 A How you hook it up to make it happen, I can't tell
4 you that.

5 Q Okay. Do you know how many bolts the procedures say
6 should be put in?

7 A We normally have to have a minimum of four, but I
8 told them to bolt up all the bolts. I said bolt it up
9 fully.

10 MR. B. JONES: Excuse me, were there eight total?

11 THE WITNESS: I don't know. I would imagine it
12 would probably be even more than that, but I don't know the
13 number.

14 BY MR. LYON:

15 Q To your knowledge, did anyone put closure activities
16 on hold and then re-initiate them at any time?

17 A Certainly not with respect to the equipment hatch.

18 Q In other words, you're certain that from the time
19 you started, it was a continuous process, nobody said hold
20 up until it was in place?

21 A Right. It took me several minutes to get, you know,
22 from when the event started to get the tasking and then to
23 get the maintenance people to get to the task, but from the
24 point that I got there, there was no interruption.

25 Q Now you did not, however, stay there the entire

1 time.

2 A No, I did not.

3 Q Could that kind of instruction have come through
4 from the time you left?

5 A I did not know of one if there was.

6 MR. CHAFFEE: How long did it take from the time you
7 left until the hatch was shut?

8 THE WITNESS: Fifteen, twenty minutes before it was
9 fully lowered and bolted in place.

10 MR. LYON: Okay, does anyone else have any
11 questions?

12 MR. B. JONES: Were you aware, Steve, of other
13 activities going on in the containment?

14 THE WITNESS: When I was outside, I really wasn't
15 aware of what was going on, other activities inside the
16 containment. When I was back inside, I understood that
17 there were several attempts to close other manways and other
18 access hatches inside the containment.

19 MR. B. JONES: You mean when you went back to the
20 control room, you found out about these other things going
21 on?

22 THE WITNESS: Yes.

23 MR. TRAGER: The hatch itself, how much does it --
24 physically how big is it, how much does it weigh, that kind
25 of thing.

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1 THE WITNESS: It's quite large, it's probably -- I'm
2 just ball parking, 15 feet tall and 12 to 15 feet wide.
3 It's as wide as from that pillar to that one down there.
4 It's big.

5 MR. TRAGER: How thick?

6 THE WITNESS: I would probably say even thicker than
7 that., it's thick.

8 MR. CHAFFEE: You're talking about eight tons of
9 metal, steel.

10 MR. TRAGER: Well the reason I asked is because it
11 seems to me that you could have problems moving it in place.
12 You would get it right most of the time, but you could have
13 difficulties.

14 THE WITNESS: They have had problems.

15 MR. TRAGER: That was the question, you could have
16 problems.

17 THE WITNESS: I believe there is an alternative to
18 close in the event the polar crane is not operable. I
19 believe there are some other hoists in there that can do
20 that.

21 MR. CHAFFEE: You're not the system expert though.

22 THE WITNESS: I'm not the system expert, no.

23 MR. CHAFFEE: So a lot of these detail questions,
24 he's not the man to answer those questions.

25 THE WITNESS: Right.

1 MR. CHAFFEE: One last question. How long did it
2 take from the time you arrived, in your mind, until you had
3 the stuff out of the way so that the people inside could
4 finish the job?

5 THE WITNESS: Twenty minutes.

6 MR. CHAFFEE: Twenty minutes. Okay, no further
7 questions. Thank you.

8 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded at
9 5:33 p.m.)

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

Name: Interview of STEVE CHESNUT

Docket Number:

Place: Vogtle Nuclear Generating Plant, Waynesboro, GA

Date: March 28, 1990

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
~~WARREN~~ WARREN
Official Reporter

Ann Riley & Associates

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