



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

July 5, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Palladino
Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Roberts
Commissioner Asselstine

FROM: James J. Cummings, Director
Office of Inspector and Auditor *James J. Cummings*

SUBJECT: DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO HARTMAN ALLEGATIONS

Upon review of the list of documents provided as Attachment 3 to the June 6, 1983, memorandum to the Commission from T. Martin, it appears certain documentation not listed which is contained in the Office of Inspector and Auditor files may be pertinent. Attached are copies of those documents.

1. Mell Interview by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Nuclear Regulation of the Committee on Environment and Public Works August 22, 1979. *1. REQUEST TO S/O. 2. SAFETIES WERE LEARNING*
2. Note, Case fm Cummings - June 7, 1983.
3. Note, Cummings fm Case - May 19, 1983.
4. Memo, Cummings fm Stello - June 3, 1983. *ID's other depositions ON ALLEGATIONS.*
5. Letter, Cummings to Jensen - May 31, 1983.
6. Chronology - Hartman Allegations - Undated. *GOOD REFERENCE ON HISTORY*
7. Memo, Cummings fm Stello - March 30, 1983.
8. Letter, West to Hickey - March 28, 1983.
9. Transcript, Tape recorded interview of H. Hartman - Oct. 29, 1979.
10. Transcript, Interview conducted Ornstein - Undated.

Contact: Mark Resner, OIA
49-24452

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11. NRC Routing Slip - info re status Hartman Allegations with Department of Justice - undated.
12. Memo, Cummings fm Smith re Grand Jury investigation - Three Mile Island - February 18, 1982. *2ND GRAND JURY DECISION*
13. Note, Smith fm Cummings re status Hartman case with DOJ - December 23, 1982.
14. Memo, File fm Smith re TMI Prosecution - August 12, 1982.
15. Memo, Denton fm Cummings re Preservation of Records on TMI-2 Accident - April 29, 1982.
16. Letter, Cummings to Bowman, DOJ - April 29, 1982.
17. Letter, Cummings fm Lippe, DOJ - March 13, 1981.

Attachments:

As Stated

cc: J. McDermott, OCM, w/attach
W. Dircks, EDO, w/o attach
OGC, w/attach
OPE, w/attach
T. Martin, Region I

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November 6, 1979

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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing a copy of Chuck Nell's attraction sheet from his
show, held on August 22, 1979, as well as the signature page from that
show.

Sincerely,

Matias F. Travieso-Diaz

Enclosure

INTERVIEW OF CHUCK MELL

United States Senate,

Subcommittee on Nuclear
Regulation of the Committee on
Environment and Public Works,
Wednesday, August 22, 1979.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The subcommittee staff met at 11:19 a.m., on Three Mile
Island.

Staff Present. Drew Arena, Chief Counsel, and Steven M.
Baker, Investigator.

Mr. Arena. We are going on the record at 11:19 with
Charles Mell.

Do you prefer Chuck or Charles?

Mr. Mell. Chuck.

Mr. Arena. You were on duty on the shift preceding the
graveyard shift of the 27th and 28th?

Mr. Mell. What do you mean the graveyard; midnights?

Mr. Arena. Yes.

Mr. Mell. Right.

Mr. Arena. So you were on the night of the 27th?

Mr. Mell. Right.

Mr. Arena. Starting at about 3 in the afternoon?

Mr. Mell. 3 to 11.

Mr. Arena. Let me show this. Let the record reflect I &

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1 showing Mr Mell a copy of the control room log for March 27th
2 That's your signature?

3 Mr. Mell. Yes.

4 Mr. Arena. Just a few questions. This entry at 2000
5 hours running the small break LOCA, could you describe what it
6 was and what that involved?

7 Mr. Mell. Okay. We have a requirement, I believe it is
8 monthly, we have to run a small break LOCA drill. The NRC
9 realized we did not have protection for a small break LOCA. So
10 once a month we run a drill, the foreman will set it up. Usually
11 the way it runs, we talk about it first with the people in the
12 why we are doing it, what we are going to do, what requirement
13 is it is necessary. We give the worse possible condition that
14 we do have a break in the small line and that we do lose diesel
15 generator, we lose electrical buses, we have to run the makeup
16 pump generator, we lose electrical power to the valves, the
17 operator has to go down and operate one of the valves down the
18 The six operator goes in. He manipulates normally manual valve
19 cross-connect valves. One of the control operators, of which
20 have three, they go down and operate one of the injection valve
21 it's a motor valve that he operates. So we have a certain time
22 frame set up, like a total of 10 minutes is what Met Ed them-
23 selves set up, and we had to get that approved for the NRC.

24 We run that drill. We don't actually do anything. We do
25 the time frame. We go down, the guy puts the headphones on, he

1 says, "I'm here now." He says, "Okay, I want to throttle into
2 so many GPM," you have indication in the control room and you
3 talk that through.

4 Mr. Arena. "It" being makeup?

5 Mr. Mell. Yes, makeup.

6 Mr. Arena. In other words, it was just at the time that
7 the drill was run, it was just the regular monthly time to do

8 Mr. Mell. Right.

9 Mr. Arena. There wasn't any special reason?

10 Mr. Mell. No, a monthly requirement.

11 Mr. Arena. Was it finished in about 10 minutes?

12 Mr. Mell. Yes.

13 Mr. Arena. Again, still referring to the log, I notice
14 that there are two entries. One at 1545 and another at 2045
15 indicating pumping down the reactor coolant drain tank. About
16 how many times during an ordinary shift of duty in the control
17 room would you have to pump down?

18 Mr. Mell. That's tough to say. It depended on what the
19 shift before you did. We get an alarm in the back -- as you
20 probably know, this is on the back panel and probably worsened
21 the shape we were in on the 28th, because we didn't have any
22 indication on the front.

23 Mr. Arena. Prior to the 3 to 11 shift on the 27th, when
24 had you last been on duty?

25 Mr. Mell. I don't understand what you are asking?

1 Mr. Arena. In terms of just the normal shift rotation,
2 you been on shift from 3 to 11 on the 26th, that week, did you
3 work the same shift?

4 Mr. Mell. Could you tell me what day of the week it was
5 I don't even remember.

6 Mr. Arena. The 26th was Monday.

7 Mr. Mell. I was on afternoons that day. We run afternoo:
8 through Wednesday. So I would have been on afternoons. The
9 accident was Wednesday, right?

10 Mr. Arena. Yes.

11 Mr. Mell. Okay.

12 Mr. Arena. Do you happen to remember how many times you
13 had occasion to pump down the RCOT when you were on duty on
14 Monday?

15 Mr. Mell. What do you mean on duty, if I had the panel?
16 There's three control room operators on our shift. We rotate:
17 One guy watches the panel, one guy takes care of switching and
18 tagging, and the third guy, normally, the way we work it, would
19 take care of surveillance. We rotate. One day you are the p:
20 one day surveillance, one day switching and tags, so I would
21 have had it every third day. I thought you meant on duty,
22 actually on shift. But it was about the same, I would say, t:
23 day I would have had the panel before that. It was pretty we:
24 common.

25 Mr. Arena. What was the source, to the best of your

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1 knowledge, if you know at the time, (C) the fluid in the RCDT r

2 Mr. Mell. I believe one of the reactor coolant pumps was
3 leaking water and 2 B reactor coolant pump and also the relief
4 valves on the pressurizer were leaking slightly.

5 Mr. Arena. The EMOV and the code safeties?

6 Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you which one they were
7 They assumed it was one or two of the code safeties.

8 Mr. Arena. Again, were you aware of a regular leakage
9 problem with those pressurizer valves?

10 Mr. Mell. Would you explain that? Regular problem?

11 Mr. Arena. Were you aware on the 27th that there had been
12 leakage past those valves on prior shifts or on your shift or
13 Monday or for a period of time before that?

14 Mr. Mell. Yes, they leaked for some time.

15 Mr. Arena. Did any of your supervisors or anybody tell you
16 to kind of keep an eye on that leakage rate?

17 Mr. Mell. Yes. As a matter of fact, I believe we calculate
18 the leakage rate. Prior to the accident, I believe they called
19 up, you have to get permission to shut down, to come off the gr
20 so to speak. You call the dispatcher. I don't know if it is
21 Lebanon or Reading. We have a dispatcher phone in there to shut
22 down, to come off the grid, where you try to set it up so that
23 the other plants, peak-load plants that come on line to carry
24 extra load, they will be ready. You call up and try to schedu
25 an outage. I believe sometime before the accident they called

1 Mr. Arena. But it was something -- that is, the tempera
2 downstream of those leaky valves, you were watching?

3 Mr. Mell. Yes, would be on the Reading report.

4 Mr. Arena. On the 3 to 11 shift on the 27th, do you recall
5 anything which would have indicated that the rate of leakage of
6 those valves was increasing?

7 Mr. Mell. No. I'd have to say no because we were operating
8 the pressurizer spray in manual to make up for the boron dif-
9 ferences between the pressurizer and the reactor coolant system
10 because of the leaky valves. We operated for a few hours each
11 shift with the pressurizer spray in manual, and with that being
12 in manual and being a motor valve, it did not change. If I see
13 that up, the pressure once set up, if anything in that plant was
14 changing, it would show up in your pressure. If I was losing
15 more volume, the pressure would go down, whatever. I would have
16 to say no.

17 Mr. Arena. For about how long had you been, you personally
18 to the best of your knowledge, other operator personnel, been
19 compensating for that boron concentration because of this leak?
20 Days, weeks, months?

21 Mr. Mell. I don't really have a good idea. I'd say weeks
22 a few weeks anyway.

23 Mr. Arena. When you came on on the 27th, again, basing it
24 on which of the tasks you were doing, did you or any of the other
25 three operators have occasion to check the feedwater 12 A and

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1 valves to see if they were open or closed, emergency feedwater
2 Mr. Mell. No, I myself had the panel that night. You see
3 my signature in the book. I had no reason to look at it.
4 Although it is there on the panel, I had no purpose to look at
5 it and I didn't. So I really couldn't tell you whether it was
6 opened or closed. I am sure that's your next question.

7 Mr. Arena. Were the tags on the valves above, or on the
8 switches above, still in place on the 27th, do you remember that?

9 Mr. Mell. Like I said, I didn't look at it so I really
10 couldn't tell you.

11 Mr. Arena. When you went off shift --

12 Mr. Blush. Before you go on, I would like to follow that
13 up, if I may. Those tags were put on on the 19th which would
14 mean they had been there about nine days. Was it common that
15 you would have tags left dangling on a control panel like that
16 or would they be folded up?

17 Mr. Mell. Prior to the accident?

18 Mr. Blush. Prior to the accident.

19 Mr. Mell. There was no requirement about folding them up
20 then. Now there is. If the operator had a good sense about
21 them, he would fold them up. Even if they are folded, they can
22 come undone.

23 Mr. Blush. Let me ask you, have you ever folded up a tag
24 Prior to the accident, had you ever folded up a tag so you could
25 see the indications below?

1 Mr. Mell. No, but myself, I would use what we call a
2 sticker tag. If you have a small item, or myself, I think anyth-
3 on the panel should have a sticker tag -- I don't know if you
4 have seen them or not. They are about an inch-by-inch. Myself
5 I like to use them on the panel. That's my own priority.

6 Mr. Arena. Getting back to the shift log, this notation
7 RC2T, is that the reactor coolant B tank?

8 Mr. Mell. Yes.

9 Mr. Arena. Noting the additions of makeup water here dur-
10 the course of the shift, was the total volume of water during
11 that shift normal, the sort of volume you had normal?

12 Mr. Mell. I would say so. I approximated it one time at
13 about 300 gallons per hour while we were transferring it.

14 Mr. Arena. For a total of about 1,400 shifts?

15 Mr. Mell. Right.

16 Mr. Arena. Next entry here, adding hydrogen to the turb-
17 generator.

18 Mr. Mell. Right.

19 Mr. Arena. What's that 68?

20 Mr. Mell. Sixty-eight pounds. We have a pressure limit
21 the turbine generator. You want to maintain so much hydrogen
22 pressure. Hydrogen cools the generator itself. We like to
23 maintain a certain pressure in there. You call up an aux
24 operator and say you want the procedure, lineup, put more
25 pressure, we have an indication in control, if the pressure is

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1 out so much, you put more hydrogen into it.

2 Mr. Arena. Is this something you have sort of normally
3 in the course of the shift?

4 Mr. Mell. I wouldn't say per shift. Maybe once a day or
5 every two days. The turbine had a few leaks on it, which they
6 were working on by checking different vents. Westinghouse knew
7 about it and they were following up on it, and it's a tough job.

8 Mr. Arena. Then, basically, there was really nothing out
9 of the ordinary that took place on that shift?

10 Mr. Mell. No.

11 Mr. Arena. Different from Monday, the last time you were
12 on.

13 When you finished up just before midnight, did you stay
14 around the plant, or did you go home?

15 Mr. Mell. On which night, the 27th?

16 Mr. Arena. Yes, the 27th/28th. It would have been 11
17 o'clock.

18 Mr. Mell. When I got off work and was relieved, I went home.

19 Mr. Arena. When did you come back?

20 Mr. Mell. I came to work the next afternoon. I didn't get
21 to the plant, say, until between 5 and 6. They sent us all to
22 observation center.

23 Mr. Arena. Did you stay there at the observation center?

24 Mr. Mell. Until 5 or 6. And then they called and sent us
25 over here.

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1 Mr. Blush. When you say they sent you to the observation
2 center.

3 Mr. Mell. I came to the north gate like I normally came
4 work. The guards turned us away and said go down to the obser-
5 vation center and check in with your foreman who was there. We
6 sat around trying to decide what was going on in our own minds
7 until between 5 and 6. They told us to come over and go to work.

8 Mr. Blush. What was the conversation like at the observa-
9 center? What were you wondering had occurred?

10 Mr. Mell. I didn't really know. I heard that morning on
11 the news, so I called up the control room direct line and the
12 man was in a respirator. I felt bad; if they were in respirators
13 in the control room, we really had a real problem.

14 Mr. Blush. Who did you speak to when you called on the
15 direct line?

16 Mr. Mell. The operators name?

17 Mr. Blush. Yes.

18 Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you. He was in a
19 respirator.

20 Mr. Blush. What did he tell you was the situation?

21 Mr. Mell. Well, he didn't, that's the problem. He was in
22 a respirator talking to me. He said we are awfully busy. You
23 will find out when you come in this afternoon. Since he didn't
24 tell me what was going on, and I worked in the control room, I
25 figured we have a problem.

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1 Mr. Arena. So when did you go back to work, 6 o'clock?
2 Mr. Mell. Yes, I'd say around 6 o'clock.
3 Mr. Arena. And where did you go and what did you do?
4 Mr. Mell. We came into the control room. We had to wear
5 respirators to get into the control room. They were wearing
6 respirators at the time. We came in, told us to look around a
7 little bit and relieve one person. So I, myself, went to the
8 secondary panel or generator feed-pump part. I relieved an
9 operator, and we talked for half an hour to an hour on turnover
10 on what he knew went on and what the status, at least the sec-
11 ondary part was, and we went over slightly what the other guys
12 were doing. During a casualty or anything like a turbine trip
13 on a plant, having three guys -- there are like three center
14 panels. You have got a reactor panel, turbine panel, and a
15 pressurizer or makeup pump panel, injection panel. Between
16 the three of us, we normally would take a panel each. So, I
17 took the turbine panel that day.
18 Mr. Blush. You said during the casualty, what were you -
19 Mr. Mell. During the day of the accident.
20 Mr. Blush. I think you were referring about normal proce-
21 dure.
22 Mr. Mell. Before, when we would split it up. Well, on a
23 turbine trip, I call that a casualty.
24 Mr. Arena. What was the status of the turbine panel at 6
25 o'clock?

1 Mr. Mell. The turbine was shut down, we had condenser
2 vacuum, one condensate pump running. I couldn't tell you --
3 believe the feed pumps were on the turning gear if they were
4 working then. They busted several times.

5 Mr. Arena. When you say the generators, do you mean the
6 turbine generators?

7 Mr. Mell. Turbine generators.

8 Mr. Arena. Not the steam generators. That's taken care
9 of --

10 Mr. Mell. I would still take care of that since I have a
11 condensate pump. That is on another panel. You control your
12 feed pumps on one side and the steam generator levels on the
13 other side.

14 Mr. Arena. Were either of the steam generators isolated
15 at 6 o'clock?

16 Mr. Mell. I was told B was isolated.

17 Mr. Arena. And A was operating?

18 Mr. Mell. Right, and B had a busted tube, so they thought
19 they had high radiation in the B line, the B side of the plant
20 and they checked it out.

21 Mr. Arena. Did you work a full shift from 6 on into late
22 Thursday night or Friday morning? How long?

23 Mr. Mell. I worked from then until the next morning, until
24 about 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock.

25 Mr. Blush. I am a bit confused. Are we talking about 6

1 Wednesday or 6 Thursday?

2 Mr. Mell. I came to the plant about 6 o'clock Wednesday,
3 and I worked through until the following morning, until 7 or 8
4 o'clock in the morning.

5 Mr. Arena. During that time in the control room, did that
6 quiet down a little in terms of the number of people there and
7 all of that during the duration of the shift from that night to
8 the next morning?

9 Mr. Mell. What do you mean by quiet down?

10 Mr. Arena. The impression we have gotten is at least,
11 certainly during the afternoon of Wednesday, there were lots of
12 people in the control room, there were plant people, NRC people,
13 B&W people -- maybe to back up, when you got to the control room
14 at 6, how many people were there?

15 Mr. Mell. The control room was full, but the people were
16 -- like we have a roped-off area up there in the front.

17 Mr. Arena. The lines around the floor?

18 Mr. Mell. Most of the people were behind that line to where
19 the operator could get up there and operate. Our bosses were
20 there suggesting different things, talking to us, allowing us
21 essentially -- I didn't have any problem to operate up there.
22 There were a lot of people there, but even when I got there at
23 6 o'clock it wasn't that excitable. People were quiet and doing
24 their job.

25 Mr. Arena. But did the control room stay full during the

1 night?

2 Mr. Mall. I really couldn't tell you. We were so busy a
3 night. I never kept track.

4 Mr. Arena. During that night, what do you recall being -

5 Mr. Blush. Before you go on to that night, I have a question
6 about the 18th. Was there any discussion when you came on about
7 whether or not the core coverage was being maintained? Were
8 people concerned as to whether or not the core was covered at
9 that point?

10 Mr. Mall. Well, when I first came on, or there shortly
11 afterwards, we were worried about getting the reactor coolant
12 pumps started. Because we were worried about getting them
13 started, I would say, yes, they were concerned about coverage
14 to the core because you start the reactor coolant pump, you have
15 got water in there.

16 Mr. Blush. But I mean, do you remember that being factor
17 into the consideration of starting the reactor coolant pump,
18 that they were not certain that the core was covered?

19 Mr. Mall. Nothing was said to me, if that's what you are
20 asking.

21 Mr. Blush. That's what I am asking.

22 Mr. Mall. Although they were concerned about starting the
23 reactor coolant pump. To me that would mean they were concerned
24 about getting water into the core.

25 Mr. Arena. And when did they finally get that pump started

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1 do you remember?

2 Mr. Mell. A time?

3 Mr. Arena. Yes. About 8 o'clock?

4 Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you the time frame because
5 that was quite some night.

6 Mr. Blush. Early on in the shift?

7 Mr. Mell. Early on in the shift, yes.

8 Mr. Arena. Did they try to start more than one and were
9 only able to get one going, do you recall? Was it a cautious
10 thing of trying to get one going and see if it would be advisable
11 to start the others?

12 Mr. Mell. We started the one. In order to start that, we
13 had to jump routes and different relays, starting interlocks.
14 As far as I know, we were going to start another one, but that
15 was cancelled for some reason. I really couldn't tell you why.
16 Discussions were going back and forth all night trying to figure
17 out what would be the best way to take care of it. I believe
18 they were discussing starting the second one.

19 Mr. Arena. While you were on shift, did they go ahead and
20 get any other reactor pumps going?

21 Mr. Mell. Did we start one?

22 Mr. Arena. You got one started?

23 Mr. Mell. Right.

24 Mr. Arena. And subsequent to that one, did you start any
25 others?

1 Mr. Mell. Not to my knowledge.

2 Mr. Arena. Back to the evening. The control room was full
3 about 6. Did it stay full until the next morning or did it
4 thin out a little bit behind the line, people were going home?

5 Mr. Mell. I can't tell you.

6 Mr. Arena. Do you remember hearing during that time from
7 any discussions about the existence or the presence of hydrogen
8 either in containment or in the system itself?

9 Mr. Mell. Hydrogen itself, no. That we did have a bubble
10 yes, we talked about that after we started the reactor coolant
11 pump. The way the plant was responding it wasn't responding
12 normally and one of my co-workers suggested we had a bubble so-
13 where.

14 Mr. Blush. Who was that?

15 Mr. Mell. Ted Eljes. He suggested as soon as we started
16 the pump, that reacted sluggishly and there probably was a bubble
17 somewhere. He suggested it was in the steam generator, being a
18 higher point.

19 Mr. Arena. During the evening, do you remember anybody
20 looking at or discussing the reactor building containment pres-
21 sure strip chart?

22 Mr. Mell. That was shown to me when I came in on the after-
23 noon. The man I relieved showed that to me. He said today the
24 both went up and the pumps came on. So he said they looked at
25 it, the pressure went back down, they turned the pumps off.

1 They thought it was erroneous at the time. He looked at it and
2 could think of no reason why they came on, except for maybe the
3 instrument was failing.

4 Mr. Arena. We are talking about the 1:50 spike?

5 Mr. Mall. Right.

6 Mr. Arena. And was there continuing discussion during the
7 night of trying to figure out what the source of that spike on
8 the chart was?

9 Mr. Mall. I wouldn't say that night. I would say the ne-
10 ight someone suggested it could be a hydrogen burn in there -
11 or the media calls it a hydrogen explosion; that is not really
12 true either -- hydrogen burn and possibly that's what caused
13 the pressure. We can explain one by instrument failure, but not
14 both of them.

15 Mr. Arena. In that next discussion where it was suggested
16 that would have been Friday?

17 Mr. Mall. Or Thursday. Thursday afternoon, I would say.

18 Mr. Arena. Do you know if anybody had any containment
19 air sample information to factor into that evaluation, specifi-
20 cally in terms of the unusually low oxygen concentration in the
21 containment area?

22 Mr. Mall. No.

23 Mr. Arena. Do you know if at any time subsequent, the
24 oxygen percentage in containment was used to evaluate the
25 occurrence of a burn?

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1 Mr. Mell. I couldn't tell you.

2 Mr. Blush. You didn't have any contact with B&W personnel

3 in the control room that you know of or that you can recall?

4 Mr. Mell. I'm not certain, but I believe Larry Flint might

5 have been there.

6 Mr. Blush. Excuse me, you mean John Flint?

7 Mr. Mell. Excuse me, John Flint. I know I talked to him

8 in the first few days. I'm not sure if he was there the first

9 day or not. He was our representative from B&W, but as far as

10 being set up, I couldn't tell you.

11 Mr. Blush. Do you remember what you spoke to him about?

12 Mr. Mell. Yes, I was asking him what he thought went on?

13 Mr. Blush. What did he say?

14 Mr. Mell. He said it wasn't as bad as the media had put

15 it, that he had to look at some further data to make sure what

16 really did go on.

17 Mr. Blush. And that conversation would have taken place

18 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday?

19 Mr. Mell. I believe Wednesday.

20 Mr. Blush. Early on in your shift or later into the

21 evening?

22 Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you.

23 Mr. Arena. Chuck, do you remember seeing any NRC personnel

24 in the control room during your Wednesday through Thursday shift?

25 Mr. Mell. NRC was there.

1 Mr. Arena. Did you have occasion to talk to them about
2 anything?

3 Mr. Mell. No.

4 Mr. Arena. Where were they physically in the control room?

5 Mr. Mell. In the back and in and out of the office there.

6 Mr. Arena. During the course of that shift, was Gary Miller
7 still around?

8 Mr. Mell. Yes, I'd say he was there.

9 Mr. Arena. And he was still functioning as emergency
10 director in overall charge of the plant?

11 Mr. Mell. Yes.

12 Mr. Arena. Did you have occasion to talk to him at all?

13 Mr. Mell. No.

14 Mr. Blush. Who was directly over you? Who were you
15 reporting to and receiving directions from on the 28th?

16 Mr. Mell. I normally work for the foreman. It would be
17 Bill Conway and shift supervisor was there, Brian Mahler was
18 there, and Mike Ross was there helping. Mike Ross was kind of
19 hawthorne in the startup of the coolant pump.

20 Mr. Blush. What was Brian primarily concerned with?

21 Mr. Mell. What do you mean primarily concerned with?

22 Mr. Blush. Was he really looking at all the parameters, or
23 was there one particular decision that he was trying to formulate?

24 Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you.

25 Mr. Blush. Did you have conversations with Brian that

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1 night, as far as you can recall?

2 Mr. Mell. As far as what, the plant?

3 Mr. Blush. Yes.

4 Mr. Mell. Normal conversation, yes. As far as the plant
5 we really didn't know yet. We knew we had to get the reactor
6 coolant pumps started. That's about all.

7 Mr. Blush. What I am really getting at is, were you
8 directed by anyone to do anything that night in terms of turning
9 on or off or any other operations that would affect the plant
10 status personally?

11 Mr. Mell. The only thing that I was concerned with that
12 night on that panel was we began to lose condenser vacuum. We
13 lost the boilers from Unit 1, and we were worrying -- when you
14 lose vacuum at a certain point, you quit dumping your steam
15 condenser and start dumping to the atmosphere. I was concerned
16 about letting the steam go to the atmosphere. If it was as bad
17 as they said it was, we didn't want to put it to the atmosphere
18 The boilers, it takes a while to --

19 Mr. Blush. Did you lose vacuum in the condenser that night?

20 Mr. Mell. What do you mean by lose?

21 Mr. Blush. Did you vent to the atmosphere?

22 Mr. Mell. No, we didn't. I did talk to Gary Miller that
23 time. I explained to him what was going on. He said no way
24 would we dump the atmosphere. But we did get the steam back
25 time and held the vacuum. We were going to send someone down

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and isolate with the manual valves.

Mr. Blush. And did you do that?

Mr. Mell. I didn't send someone, but I heard that they did, yes, to make sure that we did not dump it.

Mr. Arena. By Thursday morning, did you feel that the situation in the plant was a little bit more under control than it had been when you got there at 6 o'clock?

Mr. Mell. I would say I had a good feeling; yes.

Mr. Arena. Was that feeling, do you think, shared by the other operators and people in the control room?

Mr. Mell. I really couldn't tell you what their mind was. I would think so, in talking with them; yes. We realized once we got the pumps started things were beginning to cool off; were in better shape than when we came in that day; that we had reached a peak and coming down.

Mr. Arena. When did Ted Elljes express concern about the presence of a bubble?

Mr. Mell. I would say within an hour after we started the reactor coolant pump; that Wednesday.

Mr. Arena. So that then by the morning, was he still concerned about a bubble? Was anybody else concerned about an uncondensable bubble in the system?

Mr. Mell. He told that to our boss, who at that time, I don't know, Joe Chwastyk had come over, our normal shift supervisor. I believe we discussed it with Joe Chwastyk, and he

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1 went into the back room and discussed it with his fellow boss
2 and they were deciding what they thought -- they explained to
3 him why they thought it was that way, and Joe went into the
4 back, Joe Chwastyk went into the back and started discussing
5 with the other people.

6 Mr. Arena. You don't know about the substance of the con-
7 versations?

8 Mr. Mell. Right.

9 Mr. Arena. Did you go home about 7 o'clock Thursday morn-
10 did you stay around to try to find out what else may have hap-
11 en Wednesday?

12 Mr. Mell. No. After two shifts, I went home.

13 Mr. Arena. When did you next come back to the plant?

14 Mr. Mell. Three o'clock in the next afternoon.

15 Mr. Arena. That would have been Friday afternoon?

16 Mr. Mell. I don't know now. I would say Thursday, but I
17 don't know if they asked us to work or not because that would
18 have been an off day. I really couldn't tell you.

19 Mr. Arena. Were you at work on Friday?

20 Mr. Mell. I would have been scheduled for midnights on
21 Friday; yes.

22 Mr. Arena. Did you go to work then?

23 Mr. Mell. Oh, yes.

24 Mr. Arena. By that time, what changes, if any, in terms
25 chain of command, had taken place with the arrival of the NRC?

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1 By midnig. Friday, were there NRC people there who were star-
2 to give directions or be involved in operations?

3 Mr. Mell. I wouldn't know about giving directions. As
4 far as I know, they didn't give directions, not immediately
5 anyways. The one thing that had changed is Met Ed quit giving
6 the press releases and the NRC did. They varied so much, that
7 where the public concern -- working here, I knew they were
8 actually saying the same thing, but for someone else to sit
9 there who doesn't know much about nuclear power, they would
10 look at that and say, hey, there's two different stories, some
11 one is lying. It wasn't that way at all.

12 Mr. Arena. Starting Friday and then going on into the
13 next week, were you involved at all in any of the activities
14 try to collapse the hydrogen bubble while you were on duty?

15 Mr. Mell. As far as venting the pressurizer, I would help
16 myself was on the panel. As far as helping out with someone
17 else, I may have. I really couldn't remember. I was here
18 working.

19 Mr. Arena. Could you characterize your concern and anyone
20 else you may have spoken to, expressing concern to you over the
21 weekend, into that week, about the hydrogen bubble?

22 Mr. Mell. You mean to my neighbors, is that what you are
23 talking about?

24 Mr. Arena. First in terms of yourself. Were you concerned
25 about that while you were on duty over the weekend?

1 Mr. Mell. No, it didn't bother me. I realized that we
 2 were taking care of the bubble, that the bubble had been in
 3 there on Wednesday when we started the reactor coolant pump.
 4 We were getting flow, so there was flow going through the cor
 5 There is a lot of room between the top of the core and where
 6 this bubble was or could have been. So myself I knew things
 7 were getting better. We were venting every so often, trying
 8 get rid of the bubble the way that we did.

9 Mr. Arena. Was there any concern either on your part or
 10 that you heard anybody else voice that that bubble might move?

11 Mr. Mell. The only place that I even heard that was I
 12 believe I watched that on television. They had the different
 13 physicists from all your different groups explain that it coul
 14 not as a pneumatic seal and push water out of the core compo
 15 That's when they were still worried about meltdown. Operating
 16 the plant, it didn't bother me at all because I didn't feel it
 17 would happen. It was just my own feeling.

18 Mr. Arena. Were you aware of the atmospheric releases on
 19 Thursday and Friday?

20 Mr. Mell. You mean, do I know that we were giving out
 21 gases?

22 Mr. Arena. Yes.

23 Mr. Mell. Yes.

24 Mr. Arena. Was that a subject of concern to you?

25 Mr. Mell. To me as far as what? As far as my family, as

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1 far as other people?

2 Mr. Arena. Yes.

3 Mr. Mell. I live six miles from here. I didn't move my
4 family out. I heard the readings coming in, different trucks
5 driving out taking radiation readings, and from what I could
6 the radiation readings weren't that high. The effect of breath
7 gas, what you breath in, most of it you breath out. So, there-
8 fore, I had no cause for alarm myself.

9 Mr. Arena. Do you know of anybody else on the plant staff
10 that you may have talked to during that time frame who expressed
11 concern or considered moving their family out?

12 Mr. Mell. As far as Met Ed people?

13 Mr. Arena. Yes.

14 Mr. Mell. No. I know there's another operator who lives
15 up the hill from me, say, within half a mile, he didn't move
16 family out.

17 Mr. Blush. Were you aware at all of any isotopes in the
18 control room on Wednesday when you came on? Let me rephrase:

19 Were you aware of any readings that had been taken of
20 control-room samples that indicated iodine airborne in the
21 control room?

22 Mr. Mell. No. As far as I know, we had mainly xenon gas

23 Mr. Blush. If you had heard of readings that they had
24 isotopes in the airborne activity in the control room, would
25 have bothered you? Would you have been troubled by that?

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1 Mr. (11. No.

2 Mr. Blush. And why not? Do you know the effect of iodine

3 Mr. Mell. I know that your glands hold iodine and it takes

4 a while to give off. But we had our HP people, the head people

5 Dick Dubiel was up there and he was monitoring that. I was

6 essentially leaving that up to him. At one time we did put on

7 our mask again. We had taken them off and put them back on

8 again, and he would sit there constantly taking control room

9 readings.

10 If anyone left, he would tell them, ask them where they

11 are going and tell them if they needed it or not. He was right

12 on top of that so I left that up to him.

13 Mr. Arena. Do you remember when, earlier or late in the

14 shift, it was that you had to put your respirator back on?

15 Mr. Mell. No, I can't tell you.

16 Mr. Arena. When you came on at 6, did you inquire as to

17 why people had respirators on or when you called the control

18 room?

19 Mr. Mell. No, I know how difficult it is when you have a

20 mask on. Once I realized he was in a respirator, I didn't bother

21 him at all. I realized the problem was drastic enough where he

22 didn't need to monitor me on the telephone.

23 Mr. Arena. That was 3 when you made the call?

24 Mr. Mell. No, I would say I called about noon.

25 Mr. Arena. By the time you got on duty at 6, you were in.

1 doing your job and didn't have a chance to ask about why they
2 needed to put respirators on earlier in the day?

3 Mr. Mell. Oh, I heard we had xenon gas in there.

4 Mr. Blush. You didn't hear at any time that there was
5 anything other than xenon in the samples that had been taken?

6 Mr. Mell. Well, I don't look at the sampling. So I re
7 couldn't tell you.

8 Mr. Blush. I realize that. Nobody else conveyed inform
9 to you which indicated there was anything other than xenon, i
10 that correct?

11 Mr. Mell. I would say so; yes.

12 Mr. Arena. Since the accident, are you personally conc
13 about Met Ed's ability to continue to keep you employed as a
14 result of recovery and/or re-startup of Unit 1?

15 Mr. Mell. You mean do I worry about my job? No. I hav
16 been with the people a long time. Besides, being in the nucl
17 industry, there is really not a worry about a job. I am a
18 licensed control-room operator. If there was a problem here,
19 there are other power plants. If you look into it, it's quite
20 versatile. People move quite a bit, so I have no worries at a

21 Mr. Arena. To your personal knowledge, are there other
22 operators who have expressed concern? Are you aware of any
23 discussions around the plant relating to Met Ed's ability to
24 keep this station open?

25 Mr. Mell. Not to my knowledge. The best we talked arou

1 we feel they cannot let it close, they have to clean it up and
2 reoperate it, just for Met Ed or for the whole nuclear industry
3 let's put it that way. They have to show the public that we
4 had an accident, the worst one there was and that we can clean
5 it up. We hurt no one and we can make it better. That will
6 be the best thing that ever happened to nuclear power, to clean
7 this up and get it back on the line with public opinion in our
8 favor, if that's possible.

9 Mr. Blush. We will close the record at 12:10.

10 (Whereupon, at 12:10 p.m. the interview adjourned.)

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Corrections to August 22, 1979, Interview of Chuck Nell

<u>Page</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Change</u> FROM: MAKEUP Pump GENERATOR	<u>To Read</u>
7	15/16	TO: STANDBY MAKEUP Pump	
13	6	GENERATORS	GENERATOR
17	15	ELLJES	ILLJES
19	18	B	FEED
25		MYSELF WAS ON	MYSELF WAS NOT ON


 Chuck Nell

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that I have reviewed the attached transcript of my interview with the staff of the Senate TMI Investigation and have made such corrections as necessary to make it an accurate verbatim record of said interview.

11/6/79

Date

C. E. Bell

Signed