

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

3 + + + + +

4 OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

5 INTERVIEW

6 -----X
7 IN THE MATTER OF: :

8 INTERVIEW OF

: Docket No. 4-95-016

9 JAMES RUSSELL SIMPSON :

:

10 :

11 -----X

12 Tuesday, June 13, 1995

13
14 Conference Room

15 5485 U.S. Highway 61

16 St. Francisville, Louisiana
17
18

19 The above-entitled interview was conducted at
20 8:30 a.m., when where present:
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22

23 CASE NO. 4 95-016

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1 ON BEHALF OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION:

2 JONATHAN ARMENTA, JR., Investigator

3 DENNIS BOAL, Investigator

4 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

5 Office of Investigations

6 611 Ryan Plaza Drive, Suite 400

7 Arlington, Texas 76011

8

9 ON BEHALF OF THE WITNESS:

10 (None)

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 MR. ARMENTA: For the record, this is an
3 interview of Mr. J.R. Simpson. Mr. Simpson, would you
4 give us your first name, your middle name, and spell your
5 entire, full name.

6 MR. SIMPSON: Okay. My full name is James
7 Russell Simpson. I go by J.R. The spelling of my name is
8 J-A-M-E-S, R-U-S-S-E-L-L, last name Simpson, S-I-M-P-S-O-
9 N.

10 MR. ARMENTA: Today is June 13, 1995, and it
11 is approximately 8:30 a.m. Present at this interview, Mr.
12 Simpson is Mr. Dennis Boal from our NRC regional office.
13 He is an investigator. And Mr. Joe Gillis, who is our
14 court reporter. And my name is Jonathan Armenta, Jr., and
15 I am also an NRC investigator from Region IV out of the
16 Arlington, Texas, office.

17 This interview, Mr. Simpson, is being tape-
18 recorded and will be transcribed by services of Mr. Joe
19 Gillis and his company.

20 Mr. Simpson, would you please give us your
21 physical address.

22 MR. SIMPSON: [REDACTED] 7C
23 [REDACTED]

24 MR. ARMENTA: Is there a mailing address, or
25 is this your mailing address also?

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1 MR. SIMPSON: That is my home residence and my
2 mailing address.

3 MR. ARMENTA: Your telephone number, please,
4 including your area code.

5 MR. SIMPSON: Area code is ([REDACTED])

6 MR. ARMENTA: Your date of birth?

7 MR. SIMPSON: ([REDACTED])

8 MR. ARMENTA: Your Social Security number?

9 MR. SIMPSON: ([REDACTED])

10 MR. ARMENTA: Are you employed at this present
11 time?

12 MR. SIMPSON: Yes, sir.

13 MR. ARMENTA: Where are you employed, and
14 state your position.

15 MR. SIMPSON: I am currently employed at
16 Riverbend Station, Entergy Operations, Incorporated. I am
17 presently on a rotational assignment with quality systems
18 as a technical specialist IV.

19 MR. ARMENTA: How long have you been at this
20 position?

21 MR. SIMPSON: Since October 1994,
22 approximately eight months.

23 MR. ARMENTA: And prior to that, what was your
24 title or position?

25 MR. SIMPSON: My position was maintenance

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1 planning and scheduling supervisor. I held that position
2 for approximately seven years in maintenance. Prior to
3 that, I was a maintenance support supervisor. That was
4 approximately two years, and I have been with the company
5 a total of working on 13 years.

6 MR. ARMENTA: At this time, before we proceed,
7 I would like to ask you to please stand, raise your right
8 hand, so that I may administer the oath.
9 Whereupon,

10 JAMES RUSSELL SIMPSON
11 having been first duly sworn, was called as a witness
12 herein and was examined and testified as follows:

13 MR. ARMENTA: You may be seated. Mr. Simpson,
14 may I call you J.R.?

15 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

16 MR. ARMENTA: J.R., do you want an attorney
17 present during this interview?

18 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

19 MR. ARMENTA: Does -- would you -- you and I
20 had a discussion prior to going on record. Is that
21 correct?

22 THE WITNESS: That is correct.

23 MR. ARMENTA: Do you know the purpose of the
24 interview?

25 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir. You have requested my

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1 opinion in different cases.

2 MR. ARMENTA: Is it your understanding that
3 this is a voluntary statement that you are about to give
4 us?

5 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir. I understand that all
6 this information I am to provide is on a voluntary basis.

7 MR. ARMENTA: Is it also your understanding
8 that you can at any time terminate this interview, and
9 that you are not under any obligation by the NRC?

10 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

11 MR. ARMENTA: Do you also understand that you
12 can decide to take a break for any reason, if you decide
13 for personal reason or even to -- I think that you
14 discussed earlier that you had an errand to run around
15 10:15 or so, and that if that is the case, then we will
16 terminate, but we can continue with the proceeding at a
17 later time. Is that correct?

18 THE WITNESS: That is correct.

19 MR. ARMENTA: All right.

20 EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. ARMENTA:

22 Q J.R., would you briefly tell us about your
23 educational background, and after you finish that, give us
24 your history, your work employment history.

25 A Yes, sir. I graduated high school in [REDACTED] from

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1 Providence, Kentucky. The fall of that year, I accepted a
2 scholarship to Kansas Newman College in Wichita, Kansas.
3 At that point, I pursued a bachelor of science degree from
4 Kansas Newman College. Along the way in [REDACTED] I completed
5 an A.A. degree at Madisonville Community College, and then
6 in [REDACTED] I completed my bachelor of science degree at
7 Kansas Newman College in Wichita, Kansas. 7C

8 I worked for approximately two years with the
9 Boeing Military Airplane Company in Wichita, Kansas. I
10 left them in 1982. I worked for approximately nine months
11 for Daniel Construction Company in Salisbury, North
12 Carolina. At the end of 1983, I resigned that position
13 and came to work for Gulf States Utilities in January of
14 1983.

15 BY MR. BOAL:

16 Q What was your major?

17 A I majored in secondary education with a minor
18 in business administration.

19 BY MR. ARMENTA:

20 Q When you worked at the construction site in
21 1992, was there any nuclear regulations involved?

22 A No, sir. That was a fiber plant.

23 Q So since 1983, you have been familiar in part
24 or with all of the NRC regulations. Is that correct?

25 A That is correct. I didn't really have an

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1 intimate knowledge with some of the regulations and the
2 reg guides and the ANSI standards until I came up to
3 quality systems, but I was always aware of the NRC
4 guidelines.

5 Q Are you aware of 10 CFR 50.7? We discussed
6 this earlier, but for the record, are you aware of this
7 provision in the regulations?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q What are your primary job responsibilities at
10 this time?

11 A We are -- our major responsibility is to
12 perform audits that are required by technical
13 specifications and the reg guides, and the work that I
14 have been assigned since I have been up here has been to
15 revise our -- what we call master audit plans to reflect
16 what type of audits that we are doing.

17 Q In pursuit of your primary job
18 responsibilities, have you discussed -- have you had a
19 chance to come across certain people -- Mr. Mike Malik
20 within your work during your 13-year tenure at Riverbend?

21 A Yes, sir. When I was in maintenance primarily
22 was the first working relationship that I had with Mr.
23 Malik.

24 Q And can you expand on that working
25 relationship? Was it as a coworker or supervisory or --

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1 can you expand on that, please?

2 A At that point in time, I was the supervisor of
3 maintenance planning and scheduling. His role -- and I am
4 not quite sure of his title while he was down there, but
5 he was responsible for quality employees, administrative
6 support side. At that time, he had quality control, which
7 was QC. They did field inspections, and on the other
8 side, he had, I guess, a staff of six or seven that dealt
9 with condition reports.

10 So my involvement with Michael was primarily
11 if I had a condition report to answer and to close, I
12 would work with his people on the -- well, actually
13 throughout the process and then on the closure end, and
14 typically, the only time I would coordinate with Mike is
15 if I had a problem or if we needed some supervisory
16 assistance in order to close out our condition reports.

17 Q So your interaction with Mr. Malik was actually
18 purely professional. Is that correct?

19 A That is correct.

20 Q And has it been up to this point here at
21 Riverbend?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q Do you socialize with Mr. Malik outside the
24 working environment?

25 A No, sir.

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1 Q So other than -- well, do you interact now? Do
2 you still interact with Mr. Malik?

3 A No.

4 Q So if you meet him along the hallway, it will
5 be courtesy, friendly salutation.

6 A That is correct, with the exception of next
7 week we are scheduled for a corrective action audit that
8 will involve Mike.

9 Q So that will be a possibility of interaction in
10 depth.

11 A That is correct.

12 Q And -- I am sorry. How long has this been --
13 how long have you known Mr. Malik? Since --

14 A Probably eight, nine years.

15 Q Okay.

16 A Total.

17 Q On a -- we will get to Mr. Malik in a few
18 minutes, but on a different subject, J.R., are you
19 familiar with EOI's new performance appraisal system?

20 A The PP&R or the ranking?

21 Q The PP&R.

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q And, for the record, would you explain what
24 PP&R is?

25 A The PP&R system came out --

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1 Q Or what does it stand for? What does the
2 acronym stand for? Is it performance planning and review?
3 A Right. That is the acronym.
4 Q Okay.
5 A And I first became familiar with it as a
6 supervisor in maintenance, and they rolled it out -- these
7 are approximate dates -- I will say at the beginning of
8 1994. We converted from the old GSU personal performance
9 appraisal system to the new EOI PP&R system. So that was
10 my introduction to this new performance appraisal system,
11 so I have, you know, had experience with it as a
12 supervisor and also as an employee.
13 Q Do you -- is it your understanding that you
14 have a fair assessment of the purpose of EOI as far as how
15 to evaluate a supervisor, how to evaluate a nonmanagement
16 employee?
17 A That is a tough question. I think I have an
18 idea of how the process is supposed to work.
19 Q Let me just -- maybe this will help you.
20 Considering the time that this program has been
21 implemented, do you think you have a fair idea as to what
22 EOI is looking for?
23 A Yes, sir.
24 Q Okay. Is it as fresh of an idea or as new with
25 you as with everybody?

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1 A Yes, sir. I would be on equal footing with any
2 employee at Riverbend.

3 Q Do you think that EOI has done as strongly or
4 not as strong, done their part in informing employees
5 and/or supervisors about this new appraisal system? Would
6 you say it has been very -- a blitz, or has it been done
7 gradual basis?

8 A In my opinion, they rolled the program out, and
9 when I use the term "rolled the program out," that
10 signifies implementation. And in my opinion, the
11 implementation was basically, Here it is. We went to a
12 15-minute training session that did not address any of our
13 questions or the method thereof.

14 However, if you consider any company employee
15 performance appraisal system, you have a general knowledge
16 of how they are supposed to work or the basis behind them,
17 so I wasn't really too concerned about implementing the
18 policy, because I just figured that, you know, any kind of
19 new program, you kind of implement the policy, and then
20 you work out the bugs, so to speak.

21 In my opinion, this program came out, and I
22 didn't really understand the significance of it or how it
23 would impact me personally or my department, and it wasn't
24 until later in the year that I found out the realism
25 involved behind this program.

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1 Q Okay. You mentioned a few minutes ago you made
2 a distinction between the PPR and the ranking system. Why
3 did you make that distinction?

4 A Well, because I really wasn't sure to say that
5 these two programs were tied together. I don't think they
6 were.

7 Q Did the ranking system come before or after the
8 PPR?

9 A Well, they gave us the PPR to implement at the
10 start of '94. You were supposed to have a mid-year
11 review, like in June or July of '94, and then the ranking
12 system came out in October of '94, September and October
13 of '94. So there really wasn't -- in my opinion, there
14 wasn't any clear distinction between the two programs.

15 I had to rank my employees. At that time, I
16 had approximately 17 employees in my department, and that
17 ranking was based on some criteria that they gave us
18 separate from the PPRs, because at that point in time, we
19 didn't even have our PPRs completed for everybody in the
20 department. So I don't think the two programs tied
21 together.

22 Q So when you ranked an employee -- were you
23 ranked?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q What was your ranking?

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1 A My ranking was a 9, the lowest ranking that you
2 can get on the system. It goes 1 through 9.

3 Q Is it still a 9?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q Based on this ranking, if you said it was
6 not --- they were not tied together, what was the ranking
7 based on?

8 A It was -- well, the ranking was set up to be
9 based on performance and potential, and they gave you
10 criteria in both categories to evaluate your employees
11 against. But I know the ranking that I did on my
12 employees was not the end result. In other words, it came
13 from my level to the next level, and I am not familiar
14 with the process after it left my level. I just know the
15 employees that I ranked from my evaluation was not the
16 results that came out of the final conclusion.

17 Q Is it -- am I to understand that actually you,
18 being the supervisor of -- as a supervisor of your
19 employees, you had employees that were ranked -- had a
20 different ranking than what you ranked them?

21 A That is correct. Out of my 17 employees that I
22 ranked, I think six planners were ranked as 9s; ultimately
23 five left the company, and two of the three leads were
24 ranked as 9s, which also left the company.

25 Q So what -- tell me what this rank 9 means.

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1 A From a personal standpoint?

2 Q Yes, sir.

3 A Okay. I will just offer my perspective or my
4 case.

5 Q Okay.

6 A They ranked an employee as a 9; you are given
7 an improvement plan to work towards; based on this
8 improvement plan, you can either better your ranking, or
9 you cannot meet your goals or objectives, at which case,
10 they have the opportunity to terminate you at any point in
11 time during that period. So my time frame would have been
12 from October '94 through October of '95. But at any point
13 in time, they have the right to terminate you, whether you
14 meet your goals or not.

15 Q So when you were ranked in October -- did you
16 say you were told about your ranking in October, or the
17 process --

18 A No.

19 Q When were you told you were a 9?

20 A I went and asked my supervisor or my manager in
21 December what my ranking was, and they officially told me
22 in January, at the end of January.

23 Q So we had -- are you telling me they had a
24 system that was implemented in October, and they ranked
25 you on --

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1 A Performance and potential.

2 Q -- performance and potential, but it took them
3 three months to rank you, based on performance of prior?
4 See, I don't follow you. You said it is based on
5 performance. I just want to get it clear on the record
6 that if the program was implemented in October, it was not
7 tied in with the appraisal system, so this is a new animal
8 that is coming up in October. Where did they get the
9 information to rank you from in three months?

10 A Well, obviously I am not really clear; I have
11 never been clear; and I will never understand it, because
12 I had to do it myself. And then also --

13 Q When you say you had to do it yourself, what do
14 you mean?

15 A I actually had to rank employees.

16 Q Oh, I see.

17 A And then I actually got ranked myself. And
18 they gave you a small pamphlet that said, Here is the
19 performance criteria to evaluate your employees against,
20 and then they said, Here is the potential criteria to
21 evaluate your employees against.

22 Well, one of the potential criteria was if you
23 had a college degree, that should indicate that the person
24 has some potential. You know, obviously if he has enough
25 education, intelligence to get through college, that, you

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1 know, there is a potential there for that employee to be
2 more of an asset down the road.

3 Well, you know, my supervisor told me during
4 discussions that, Hey, you are one of the most intelligent
5 supervisors I have. You know, that was a personal comment
6 to me. However, when it came time to rank, I was ranked
7 as his worst one or his lower bottom, because 10 percent
8 of all the employees had to fall into that tier. There is
9 three tiers, 1 through 3. So 10 percent of all the
10 employees had to fall into that bottom ranking, and that
11 is where I fell into.

12 So they gave us information in September and
13 said, This is the criteria you will use for ranking your
14 employees. They actually ranked you in October. That is
15 when I started my improvement plan, but not everybody was
16 given an improvement plan in October. Some people weren't
17 formally notified of their ranking until the end of
18 January. That is when they were told they were a 9. At
19 that point in time, they had not received an improvement
20 plan. That is why they were offered a severance package.

21 Q Did you take a severance package?

22 A I was not offered a severance package. The
23 reason I was not offered a severance package was because I
24 was already on an improvement plan.

25 Q Which means also that you could be terminated

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1 any time between that period that you said, October to
2 October.

3 A That is correct. At this point in time, they
4 have the right to terminate me between October of '94 and
5 October of '95, whether or not I meet my improvement plan
6 goals and objectives or not.

7 Q Two questions: One, first, what if you do meet
8 your goals of that improvement plan?

9 A If I get ranked as a 9 again, it is an
10 automatic termination.

11 Q Even if you meet or exceed your goals.

12 A That is correct.

13 Q And I guess the answer to the other question:
14 If you don't meet them, you are automatically terminated.

15 A That is correct.

16 Q But you could be automatically terminated also
17 if you do your job.

18 A That is correct.

19 Q Do you think it is fair?

20 A No, sir.

21 Q Do you think that you have been treated fairly?

22 A No, sir. However, that doesn't make any
23 difference.

24 Q Okay.

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1 BY MR. BOAL:

2 Q What is the difference between who was put on a
3 performance plan in October and who was offered a package,
4 severance package in January?

5 A In my opinion, those managers or supervisors
6 that tried to stay current with the system and policies
7 that EOI was wanting to represent, they came in; they did
8 their employees; said, Hey, these are the ones that need
9 improvement; here is your improvement plan.

10 Other supervisors and managers didn't stay
11 current with the time frame or schedule they wanted to
12 roll it out by. Therefore, they didn't get their
13 employees on improvement plans. So -- and this again is
14 just my personal opinion. If I would have stayed as the
15 supervisor in maintenance and for those employees that I
16 ranked as a 9, then I would have gotten them on
17 improvement plan right away, and that would have happened
18 in October.

19 Then in January, when you were officially to
20 notify your employees, those employees would have already
21 been on an improvement plan. Therefore, they would not
22 have been offered a severance package. However, if I were
23 to drag my feet and not get them on an improvement plan,
24 they would have been offered a severance package. That is
25 my understanding.

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1 Q So actually your supervisor was, by the way he
2 responded to the time frame, was the one who determined
3 who got a performance package.

4 A That is correct.

5 Q You said a little bit earlier that -- I think I
6 counted the number -- when you ranked your employees,
7 there were 17 of them, and it sounded to me like
8 approximately eight or nine of them were category 9. Is
9 that correct?

10 A That is correct. They totally wiped that
11 department out.

12 Q How did that occur? I mean, I thought it was
13 only 10 percent.

14 A I have no idea.

15 Q Did your rank employees as --

16 A Yes, I did.

17 Q You ranked them as --

18 A No, sir. There was only two, possibly three
19 employees that I ranked as a 9 out of my department, and I
20 use that term, my department, being responsible for that
21 department as the supervisor.

22 Q All right. Who was -- and then you provided
23 that to your supervisor.

24 A That is correct.

25 Q And who was your supervisor?

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1 A Early Ewing.

2 Q Early Ewing.

3 A Yes, sir. Well, actually I did the ranking,
4 because I was in quality systems at that time. I turned
5 over the ranking information to Ken Giadrosich. He is the
6 manager from quality assurance that took my position as
7 maintenance planning and scheduling supervisor.

8 So he took the information from me. Then
9 they, in turn, ranked the planning and scheduling
10 department employees.

11 Q Who is "they"? Do you know?

12 A Early and Ken, I would venture to say.

13 Q And when they finished, they, as you said,
14 pretty much wiped that department out, changed from two or
15 three to nine.

16 A That is correct.

17 Q Nine as 9s.

18 Q That is correct.

19 Q Were the people who were ranked 9s, were they
20 afforded any kind of appeal rights or rebuttal rights?

21 A Not that I am aware of, but I don't want to lie
22 to you either.

23 Q Well, then how about you?

24 A No, sir.

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1 BY MR. ARMENTA:
2 Q Who ranked you?
3 A Early Ewing.
4 Q Who else?
5 A I am not sure. I would imagine --
6 Q Was he the only one?
7 A I would imagine that Early went and got
8 feedback from other managers or supervisors.
9 Q I guess my question should be: What is your
10 understanding of what the process was to rank supervisors?
11 A It was my understanding that you ranked
12 supervisors just like you did employees. The supervisors
13 were ranked against each other. In other words, I would
14 have been ranked against five other supervisors in
15 maintenance. They were to rank you on performance, and
16 they were to rank you on potential.
17 Q When you say "they," who is they?
18 A Early, the manager. We were his direct
19 reports.
20 Q So he got together with other managers.
21 A He didn't have to. I am just assuming that he
22 went and got their feedback, so he wouldn't be the only
23 person involved in the ranking of this employee or the
24 supervisor. However, I don't know that to be a true
25 statement.

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1 Q Not mentioning any names, but do you believe
2 that there are employees ranked 9 that should not have
3 been ranked 9?

4 A That is correct.

5 Q Vice versa, do you believe that there are
6 employees who are not ranked 9 that should have been?

7 A That is correct.

8 BY MR. BOAL:

9 Q What was your performance rankings before this
10 category 9 came in?

11 A Prior to the category 9, all my evaluations
12 were satisfactory to above average. And I have worked for
13 several different managers and plant managers throughout
14 my 13 years. I have never had a performance problem
15 during the whole time.

16 Q Have you ever had any run-ins with anybody?

17 A Oh, sure. I mean, as far as having discussions
18 to disagree on processes or decisions or methods?

19 Q Certainly.

20 A That is correct.

21 Q Any of those names stand out to you, that you
22 had run-ins with that may have been involved in your
23 ranking as a 9?

24 A Could we rephrase that question?

25 Q Can you think of anybody in your work history

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1 here at RBS that you may have had a run-in with or a
2 disagreement that got, you know, carried further than you
3 thought it would or that you remember?

4 A Oh, that might have played a part in that
5 ranking of 9?

6 Q In ranking you as a 9. Right.

7 A No, sir. Anybody that you talked to, I am most
8 confident of, in the plant from whatever level or
9 department would categorize me as a team player during my
10 role as supervisor. However, my manager didn't see me as
11 a team player, nor my department as a team player, and
12 that played a role personally as me getting ranked as a 9.

13 Q Now, who was your manager?

14 A Early Ewing. But I never had a disagreement
15 with Early or any kind of personal conflict that I am
16 aware of that would have caused a ranking as a 9, if that
17 was your question.

18 Q Right. That was my question.

19 A Right. We didn't have any personal conflicts
20 that I am aware of, other than one time I was -- he had
21 some contractors come in to give us a presentation, and I
22 was supposed to set up a meeting at Waterford for them to
23 come down and give a team a presentation of their product.

24 Well, I set that presentation up the following
25 day, made a phone call down to Waterford to ensure that

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1 the host knew these contractors were coming down and
2 giving them a time frame for their presentation, but later
3 that evening when I got home, my wife informed me that my
4 fifth grade daughter was graduating from fifth grade the
5 next afternoon, and that was going to be an important part
6 for me to be there.

7 So I didn't call Early at home to tell him
8 that I couldn't make the meeting at Waterford. I just
9 came in to work the next day, and he was upset that I
10 didn't tell him that I couldn't make that meeting, and
11 after I explained it to Early what happened and why that I
12 needed to be at the graduation ceremony, he understood.

13 However, that was one of the items that he
14 wrote down on my appraisal. So that might have been a
15 personality conflict, or I guess he considered it
16 insubordination on my part.

17 BY MR. ARMENTA:

18 Q Have you checked your personnel file to see if
19 there was anything in that to that effect?

20 A Well, I have read the letter that Early wrote
21 me, saying, Here is the reasons why I consider you -- I
22 think he used the term "inappropriate behavior as a
23 supervisor" and here is the reasons why. I have read that
24 letter.

25 Q In general, do you believe your personal

20
1 situation with a ranking, your job performance being above
2 average and the only incident that you have just mentioned
3 to us, do you think that this is prevalent with -- could
4 be prevalent with other supervisors like yourself that
5 have been doing a good job, have really been keeping,
6 quote, their nose clean?

7 A Sure.

8 Q Can this be repeated with somebody else? Do
9 you think it can --

10 A Oh, yes. Definitely.

11 MR. ARMENTA: Well, J.R., we have gone over a
12 lot of general situations on the ranking process and the
13 appraisal system of EOI, and I talked to you before going
14 on the record that we were going to get a lot of this
15 record information and just go over it one time.

16 And I would like to ask you on record: This
17 information that you have supplied to us -- and we are
18 going to talk to you about other cases. I know we have
19 talked about Malik, but I am going to ask you specific
20 questions in a few minutes about Mr. Malik.

21 But before we go on, I would like to make a
22 stipulation in that all your education and your employee
23 history, your opinion about the PPR, your opinion about
24 the ranking process, your personal information, your
25 address and Social Security number, all this other

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1 information, that it be stipulated for the rest of the
2 record of this interview.

3 Is that okay with you?

4 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

5 MR. ARMENTA: So whenever we ask you about
6 another investigation, we will omit this portion, because
7 we have already asked you, and we will get into the
8 specifics of each different case. Do you understand?

9 THE WITNESS: That is fine with me. Yes. It
10 is redundant, and there is no value to go over it again.

11 MR. ARMENTA: All right. Well, thank you.

12 (Whereupon, at 3:45 p.m., the interview
13 continued as follows:)

14 MR. BOAL: Today is June 13. The time is
15 approximately 3:45.

16 This is a continuation of an earlier interview
17 that we had with Mr. James Russell Simpson. At that time,
18 Mr. Simpson, we explained to you we are going to ask you
19 specific questions about several different investigations
20 pertaining to alleged violations of 10 CFR 50.7 and that
21 we were going to include all the information in each of
22 those interviews that pertained to your background, your
23 education, and your general knowledge of the ranking
24 system and the performance and potential review system
25 here at Riverbend.

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1 Specifically what we would like to talk to you
2 now is in reference to case number 4-95-016, an allegation
3 of violation of 10 CFR 50.7 involving a Mr. Roger Backen.

4 BY MR. BOAL:

5 Q What I would like to ask you at this point is if
6 you could recall your professional relationship with Mr.
7 Backen.

8 A At the time that I was the maintenance
9 supervisor, planning and scheduling, Roger was the -- and
10 I am not sure of the exact title, but he was the
11 supervisor of quality assurance, and that is Bob Biggs's
12 present job, I believe.

13 So at that time, the auditors worked directly
14 for Roger, and from time to time, we would have meetings
15 to discuss findings or audit statuses, and his -- would
16 be that of the supervisor attending the meeting, lead
17 auditors presenting the information to the auditees, which
18 usually was myself or another representative of
19 maintenance. And that was probably, I would say, at least
20 four years ago.

21 Q Have you had any interaction with him since
22 then?

23 A No. Since that time, he has transferred, I
24 think, to -- like his current job is over material
25 inspection, and we did an audit of procurement about a

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1 month ago, in March. But at that time, we were more on
2 the materials side, and I didn't have any involvement with
3 the receipt inspection part of the audit. So I haven't
4 had any interaction with him.

5 Q Going back to when you did approximately four
6 years ago, did you perceive Mr. Backen to be
7 professionally competent and personable in your opinion?

8 A In my opinion, he was not very personable. He
9 was very one-sided. He really didn't work with you.
10 However, being supervisor of quality assurance, I am not
11 sure that is part of -- I am sure it is not part of the
12 job title, but he wasn't very open to suggestions or
13 comments. And I am sure I am not the only one that felt
14 that way at the time.

15 Q Do you know if Mr. Backen was ranked category
16 9?

17 A I do not know.

18 Q Well, did --

19 A There was hearsay that he was.

20 Q Would the hearsay -- would that have surprised
21 you, to hear that he was ranked a category 9?

22 A No, sir. But then again, he might have not
23 been surprised that I was ranked as a 9 either, so --

24 Q That is fine.

25 MR. BOAL: Jonathan, did you have any --

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MR. ARMENTA: No.

MR. BOAL: That concludes the questions we had
pertaining to Mr. Backen. It is now approximately 3:50
p.m., and this interview is concluded.)

(Whereupon, the interview in the above-
entitled matter was concluded.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached
proceedings before the United States Nuclear Regulatory
Commission

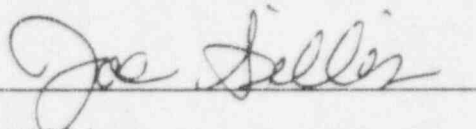
in the matter of:

Name of Proceeding: JAMES RUSSELL SIMPSON

Docket Number(s): 4-95-016

Place of Proceeding: St. Francisville, LA

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EXHIBIT 59

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