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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

INTERVIEW

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IN THE MATTER OF: :

INTERVIEW OF : Docket No.

RICHARD DAVID de MONTFORT : 2-96-033

:

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Wednesday, September 19, 1996

Conference Room - Second Floor

Crystal River Plant

15760 West Powerline Street

Crystal River, Florida

The above-entitled interview was conducted at
10:02 a.m.

*Received this transcript and made
comments on 11/6/96*
[Signature]

BEFORE:

JIM VORSE

Senior Investigator

A/6

EXHIBIT 7

PAGE 1 OF 15 PAGE(S)

CASE NO. 2-96-033

NC portions

1 APPEARANCES:

2 On Behalf of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

3 JAMES VORSE, Senior Investigator

4 Region II NRC Office of Investigations

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6 Atlanta, Georgia 30323

7 On Behalf of the Interviewee, Richard de Montfort

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. VORSE: For the record, today's date is
3 19 September 1996. The time is 10:02 a.m. I'm Special
4 Agent Jim Vorse with the NRC's Office of Investigations.
5 I'll be conducting this interview.

6 During this proceeding, which is being recorded
7 for transcription, the NRC Office of Investigation will
8 conduct an interview of Richard David de Montfort. This
9 interview pertains to OI investigation number 2-96-033.
10 The location of the interview is the Administration
11 Building, Crystal River Nuclear Plant, Crystal River,
12 Florida.

13 And would you please identify yourself for the
14 record, Mr. Glenn.

15 MR. GLENN: Alex Glenn. Corporate Counsel,
16 Florida Power Corporation.

17 MR. VORSE: Mr. de Montfort, would you identify
18 yourself, please.

19 MR. de MONTFORT: Richard David de Montfort,
20 Manager of Nuclear Plant Operations, Crystal River Unit
21 III.

22 MR. VORSE: Okay. Would you go ahead and
23 administer the oath, Peggy.

24 Whereupon,

25 RICHARD DAVID de MONTFORT,

1 being first duly sworn by the Notary Public, was examined
2 and testified as follows:

3 EXAMINATION

4 MR. VORSE: Mr. de Montfort, I need your date of
5 birth and Social Security number.

6 THE WITNESS: ([REDACTED]) My Social
7 Security number is ([REDACTED]) 7C

8 MR. VORSE: Okay. And would you give me your
9 education and experience, please.

10 THE WITNESS: My education and experience?

11 MR. VORSE: Yes, both.

12 THE WITNESS: I have a high school diploma,
13 general -- GED. I have a two-year degree from Central
14 Florida Community College.

15 I've been at Florida Power for 15, coming up on
16 16 years. Currently hold an active Senior Reactor
17 Operator's license.

18 MR. VORSE: How long have you had that senior
19 reactor operator's license?

20 THE WITNESS: I believe 11, almost 12 years.

21 MR. VORSE: And would you describe your duties,
22 your present duties.

23 THE WITNESS: My current title is Manager of
24 Nuclear Plant Operations. I directly supervise the control
25 room crews, control room supervisors and the activities

7C portions

1 that go on inside the control room to ensure safe operation
2 of the nuclear power plant.

3 MR. VORSE: How was the incident with the R ten
4 versus Oscar ten, lowering of one assembly on the other and
5 Romeo ten, how was this brought to your attention?

6 THE WITNESS: It was brought to my attention on
7 the 28th, the morning of the 28th, about 7:50 in the
8 morning, I believe is what I wrote in my Franklin Day
9 Planner. Dave Jones came into my office, which is the
10 supervisor that was involved, the refueling supervisor that
11 was involved. We had an approximately two-minute
12 conversation. I was on my way to training that day.

13 He explained what happened to me, what happened
14 to the fuel assembly. He gave me what he felt was the root
15 cause, which was the ability to misinterpret the move sheet
16 based on it being handwritten and based on the way the
17 zeros and the 0's were made. It seemed like a reasonable
18 root cause. And he stated that he would be following up
19 with the reactor engineer, Mike Culver.

20 And that was pretty much the extent of our
21 conversation.

22 MR. VORSE: Okay. And when did you see the
23 precursor card that was signed anonymously that described
24 the incident?

25 THE WITNESS: Right. The first time that I have

1 in my Franklin Planner that I was aware of that was that
2 same day, approximately 1500. I believe I was in the
3 nuclear administration building, coming back on site from
4 training where I was that day, and was either in
5 discussions with my supervisor, Ron Davis, or headed that
6 way. So I can't really remember the details.

7 MR. VORSE: Are you comfortable with the -- that
8 the old assembly is okay, not damaged?

9 THE WITNESS: Am I comfortable with the
10 integrity of the fuel assembly? Based on my knowledge of
11 the fuel and refueling activities, which is all I can do is
12 base that on my experience and my training, and the
13 concurrence of our reactor engineers, both John Weaver at
14 the time and Mike Culver after he was notified, I'm
15 comfortable with the integrity of the fuel, yes.

16 MR. VORSE: Do you know what time the precursor
17 card was given to the first person, or how that -- who
18 received it first?

19 THE WITNESS: The way I understand it, and I can
20 say I just had, you know, discussions along the
21 investigatory path, the precursor card as I understand was
22 mailed, which probably resulted in its delay getting to the
23 shift manager. Usually our precursor cards are handed
24 directly to our first lines or handed directly to the shift
25 manager for evaluation.

1 I understand that this precursor card was mailed
2 and that Larry Moffatt was the shift manager that actually
3 received the precursor card, or opened the mail, should I
4 say.

5 I also understand that once Larry read the
6 anonymous precursor card that he at that time began
7 informing upper management, including myself.

8 MR. VORSE: Is there anything you'd like to
9 state for the record that you think is important that I
10 didn't ask?

11 THE WITNESS: It's hard to understand exac --
12 you know, the reasons that the issue that we're looking at.
13 Just after the prec -- just after 1500, as I mentioned,
14 when Ron ^{Davis as 11/16/96} ~~David~~, my supervisor, my assistant director and me
15 discussed the precursor card, he recognized the
16 significance of the precursor card and of the event.

17 I normally debrief with Ron at the end of each
18 day. I'm new to this position. I was hired January 2nd as
19 this position. And Ron has basically been, so to speak, my
20 mentor as far as issues along these lines.

21 When Ron and myself found out about the anonymous
22 precursor card, and that I believe was Ron's first notice
23 of the event itself, he recognized the significance of the
24 event. And we immediately went up into the control room to
25 get more details right from Dave Jones. And that kicked

1 off the event investigation and the HPES and along those
2 lines.

3 You know, it's not an excuse that I did not
4 follow up on writing the precursor card or generate a
5 problem report immediately, that I was going to training,
6 you know, that day.

7 Dave Jones is one of my senior shift supervisors,
8 a very professional shift supervisor, a very conservative
9 shift supervisor, and I used that knowledge to feel like he
10 was adeq -- would adequately follow up on the issue. And
11 he would follow up with the reactor engineer and we would
12 make sure that, you know, fuel integrity was not
13 compromised.

14 That seemed reasonable that morning to me. When
15 I came back and discussed the incident with Ron Davis he
16 clearly sees the not only the fuel integrity issue but the
17 -- a bigger picture, which I now see, is in the number of
18 errors and the safeguards that we had in place, which had
19 to break down to get us to this point, which concerns me
20 actually today more of the assembly as I know it.

21 And we have a log of safeguards: the tag board,
22 the spotters, repeating of the fuel location, the move
23 sheets. All those are in an attempt not to have an
24 incident like this, and all those had to break down at the
25 same time. And that really, you know, bothered us. It

1 bothered me. I did not recognize that or did not get into
2 that level of detail that morning. I failed to do that.

3 I don't know if you're interested in further
4 corrective actions and how that, you know, played out and
5 IPAP coming in.

6 MR. VORSE: Maybe the reasons, staff might be
7 interested in that. Why don't you tell me what you've done
8 to --

9 THE WITNESS: Well, we immediately kicked off a
10 HPES and --

11 MR. VORSE: What does that stand for?

12 THE WITNESS: Human performance evaluation. We
13 selected somebody within our department that had been known
14 for very good root causes, had been trained specifically in
15 doing root causes and HPES'. Tom Metcalf. We selected him
16 specifically for this due to the sensitivity. We gave him
17 the time to do that event investigation.

18 When some of the corrective actions came out of
19 the -- out of the investigation, or the HPES, we placed
20 some of those into our internal tracking system. We
21 recognized that there was no problem report. We did not
22 see that as a problem. We had the -- we felt we understood
23 the event, we felt we had corrective actions. And that is
24 the bottom line of the corrective action program.

25 We tracked some of them internally to our

1 department and we added several others to a problem report
2 that was initiated a week earlier based on a fuel handling
3 event that we had. So we added the corrective actions
4 together.

5 Looking back, the corrective actions probably
6 were not adequate to cover all the things that we know
7 today around the issue. So we had -- after IPAP brought it
8 up we have since, you know, generated another problem
9 report that deals specifically with some of the issues that
10 have come up.

11 Precursor cards and the anonymous part of the
12 precursor card system. When I first came into the
13 department the department was not using precursor cards,
14 which is just January of this year. They were using an
15 internal tracking system that went straight to the manager
16 of nuclear plant operations for disposition.

17 Me and Ron recognized that that was probably a
18 weakness within the department, that our business is the
19 plant's business just as the plant's business is our
20 business. And we terminated that program and went to the
21 precursor card program.

22 We have had several discussions, training classes
23 on expectations, set shift goals for writing precursor
24 cards. We have encouraged reportability, we have not taken
25 disciplinary action on anybody that has reported an event

1 that would have otherwise been unknown to management.

2 That's not to say that we didn't have an event,
3 took disciplinary action, and wrote a precursor to document
4 the event. But if an individual came to us and said out in
5 the field I made a mistake, I corrected the mistake, you
6 would have never known about it but here it is, we have
7 taken no disciplinary action and actually we're trying to
8 advertise that fact because we know how important it is to
9 know what's going on out in the field.

10 We've had several examples this year where that
11 has occurred. We are still struggling with that. There is
12 a lot of pressure at our power plant, both economically,
13 both resulting from the make-up tank investigations and the
14 escalated enforcements and interviews and OI investigations
15 that we've had since then. The pressure is there, the
16 pressure is real, and the people sense it.

17 It's our job to try to alleviate those concerns
18 and keep our disciplinary policies up front and make them
19 as consistent as we can. And we work that way. But there
20 is, you know, there are people out there that still feel
21 uncomfortable bringing issues up. And they may feel
22 uncomfortable bringing issues up based on getting one of
23 their fellow workers in trouble and they know that trouble,
24 you know, what that means. Or they may not bring it up
25 based on what they feel may do to them.

1 And we work hard on that issue. We keep our
2 disciplinary actions consistent, and we try to. And we try
3 to continue to talk to the people and try to get through
4 this low point that we're at right now that's out there.

5 MR. GLENN: Have you seen a -- any trends in the
6 number of precursor cards --

7 THE WITNESS: Absolutely. The entire year has
8 continuously been trending upwards, not only in the number
9 but in the quality. And what I mean by quality is it's
10 easy to write a precursor card on a different department or
11 a different issue to say they didn't do their job. That's
12 a good precursor card.

13 Quality, to me in my department would mean when
14 somebody can honestly admit, we made a mistake within our
15 department, so that I can take a look at the issue and kind
16 of come up with corrective actions and we can solve this
17 problem.

18 We can do an evaluation of the ^{error} ~~air~~ ^{of nature}, did it cause
19 a problem, did it exceed any design basis limits, what
20 exactly was the problem. We've done that. We've shared it
21 with people when we do it.

22 But . . . arly we're seeing more. I think we're
23 breaking through. But, you know, I guess I can honestly
24 say things -- and I'm not picking on this, but things like
25 this, and this is just an example. The entire department

1 knows that this is going on. The entire department knows
2 the stress that this puts people under and --

3 MR. GLENN: By this, you mean an OI
4 investigation?

5 THE WITNESS: Right. IPAP investigation, OI
6 investigations. And it puts a lot of pressure on
7 everybody, you know. So.

8 MR. VORSE: Are these precursor cards tracked?
9 Are they numbered and tracked so that something doesn't
10 fall through the cracks?

11 THE WITNESS: They are numbered, tracked,
12 responded to.

13 MR. VORSE: Is there a file kept on each one?

14 THE WITNESS: There's a file kept on each one,
15 yes.

16 MR. VORSE: So it's documented with -- with
17 additional --

18 THE WITNESS: Oh, IPAP inspections spent a
19 significant part of their time looking at our precursor
20 card systems and we had fairly good words based on our
21 precursor card system. They found a few that the response
22 may not have been completely adequate, or reading it six
23 months later may not have told you the whole story of
24 everything that we did. But generally they see the trend
25 as a positive trend and they see us using more and more

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the attached proceedings
before the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission in
the matter of:

Name of Proceeding: Interview of Richard de Montfort
Docket Number(s): 2-96-033
Place of Proceeding: Crystal River Nuclear Plant
Crystal River, Florida

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



Peggy S. May

Official Reporter
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