

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
3 OFFICE OF INSPECTOR AND AUDITOR
4 INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW

5
6 Kerr-McGee Sequoyah Fuel
Facility

7 Gore, Oklahoma

8 Wednesday, March 19, 1986

9
10 The investigative interview convened at 2:45 p.m.

11 PRESENT:

12 LEON McCOY, Interviewee

13
14 H. BROOKS GRIFFIN
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

15 DONALD D. DRISKILL
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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EXHIBIT 86
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GRIFFIN: For the record, this is an interview of Leon McCoy, M-c-C-o-y, who is employed by Kerr-McGee. The location of this interview is the ranch trailer at the Sequoyah Fuels Facility, Gore, Oklahoma. The date is March 19, 1986. The time is 2:44 p.m.

Present at this interview are Leon McCoy, and on behalf of the NRC, Don D. Driskill, and myself, H. Brooks Griffin. This interview is being transcribed by a court reporter.

I need you to rise and raise your right hand. I want to swear you to the contents of your testimony. Whereupon,

LEON MC COY

was called as a witness and, having been first duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

BY MR. GRIFFIN:

Q How long have you worked for Kerr-McGee?

A Since April 16, 1969.

Q When did you first become an area supervisor?

A '79.

Q In your job as area supervisor, you supervise all the shift supervisors, do you not?

A Correct.

1 Q In the course of the last two or three months
2 have you been interviewed previously by the NRC?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Have you also been interviewed by the OSHA
5 representatives and the Kerr-McGee attorneys?

6 A OSHA, I don't think so. Kerr-McGee attorneys,
7 yes.

8 Q Who is your immediate superior in the chain of
9 command over there?

10 A Joe Davenport.

11 Q And what is his title?

12 A Production manager.

13 Q As area supervisor over the shift supervisors, I
14 presume you are knowledgeable in the day-to-day working
15 procedures -- and I'm not really referring to the written
16 procedures at this point, but the day-to-day procedures in
17 the shipping department; are you not?

18 A I am.

19 Q Would you mind giving me a brief narrative of
20 what is required to fill a cylinder once it is ready to
21 drain?

22 A Okay, after it is ready to drain, the cold trap
23 is hot, okay, it should have a cylinder hooked to the drain
24 header or the pigtail. The pigtail should have been
25 pressure checked. The cylinder, of course, is supposed to

1 be quality assurance inspected to meet specs, supposed to
2 have in their access the original tare and the net tare,
3 and the difference is a cylinder that has been filled a few
4 times, it had a head that won't vaporize out, and that's
5 the difference in the net.

6 Some shifts use two people to drain, one at the
7 cold trap, one at the drain manifold. The reason for that,
8 if you develop a leak and you got someone at the cold trap
9 you can shut the valve off at the cold trap and keep any
10 more UF-6 from going into the drain header which would be
11 lost to the atmosphere, and the guy on the bottom detects
12 for leaks. They both got a radio where they can
13 communicate back and forth and they watch the pressure
14 gauge and that's one way they can tell when the UF-6 is
15 filling the header up and you've got for restriction.
16 There are other ways. Usually you have a little vibration
17 in the headers when the weight comes down. Now there was
18 something that I thought I had missed on -- they zero the
19 scales before they start draining into them or they know
20 how much was in the cylinder that they are actually going
21 to drain in that had UF-6 from a previous drain. They
22 monitor the scales -- scales, the drain scales are in
23 30-pound increments. They are plus or minus maybe 20, 30
24 pounds, and they monitor the scales and the pressure on the
25 gauge if the cylinder fills up to whatever they are

1 draining into it, which instructions is 100 pounds over
2 maximum net --

3 Q In the case of a 10-ton cylinder what would they
4 fill to then?

5 A I believe -- I think it was 21,150 or 180, in
6 that neighborhood. Let's see, 21,180 would give you 150
7 pounds, I guess, wouldn't it, so it is 100 pounds above
8 21,030, and if they are still draining, depending on which
9 header they are draining from, they will switch the drain
10 over into the other drain station to finish emptying the
11 cold trap.

12 The procedure states that they are to evacuate
13 out the overfill, excess amount over 21,030 before, you
14 know, it is supposed to evacuate out, and after the
15 draining is completed, the evacuation of the pigtail, the
16 drain canisters and the headers takes place, and then the
17 cylinders are disconnected. We got a small procedure that
18 I wrote on hooking up with a pigtail and the key ring over
19 action -- that's for safety measure -- and the cylinder is
20 taken it a steam chest --

21 Q Let me stop you right there. You said the
22 procedure called for 100 pounds evacuation at the drain
23 station?

24 A Yes, that's the way --

25 Q As far as you know, is that what the chemical

1 operators are doing?

2 A As far as I know. I thought they were doing
3 that. I thought on procedure -- but, well, after this
4 incident has happened in the past, they were in the habit
5 of taking the cylinder to the steam chest with the excess
6 amount over the maximum, heating it 12 hours and then
7 evacuating out just prior to sampling, and that has become
8 very knowledgeable to me since this incident.

9 Q I'm telling you this: When we came last week we
10 had our inspectors look at the cylinder status records.
11 They found hundreds of instances where the amounts going to
12 the steam chest, the cylinders were in excess of 100 pounds,,
13 120 pounds, almost across the board with all operators,
14 almost all shifts. Is your testimony that you didn't know
15 this was occurring until after the accident?

16 A In the back of my mind I should have, but I
17 didn't realize it until after the accident.

18 Q Could you continue in your narration of what
19 happens after you -- let's pick up when you are pulling a
20 cylinder out of the steam chest. What is the procedure?

21 A Well, the procedure states that -- I don't
22 recall it actually stating any steps to go about taking it
23 out of the steam chest, but they take the fork truck,
24 remove it from the steam chest, and the procedure states
25 that hot liquid UF-6 -- and my impression, whether cold or

1 hot, a fork truck should be run with the forks as close to
2 the ground as possible and it states about no sudden stops,
3 jerky turns, et cetera, and then it is brought to the scale
4 room where it is put on a cylinder cart, moved into the
5 scale room. They set their scales with the weight of
6 whatever the cylinder is, and they hook it to a pigtail and
7 there is where they do their evacuation, and those scales
8 are pretty accurate.

9 They evacuate it down to whatever, evacuate down
10 to whatever they want to evacuate it down to. It is set in
11 my mind, 100 or get it down to the maximum net or a little
12 below and then they roll the cylinder. The valve will be
13 below the liquid which is 90 degree or 3 -- let's see, 3
14 o'clock, 9 o'clock, either side, but these rolls
15 counterclockwise, so it would be -- what is
16 counterclockwise, 9 o'clock, so the valve is not under the
17 liquid. And they cool the bomb, they heat tape the
18 connections, and they pull a sample. They will open the
19 valve on the sample bomb and then correct the cylinder
20 valve. It takes an experienced operator to pull a sample
21 because I have pulled them and right now if I ventured to
22 pull one I wouldn't swear as to how much I would get in the
23 bomb or not. It is experience.

24 Q Let's go back in the process you have just
25 described. Have you ever had occasion to either personally

1 witness or be aware of overfilled cylinders at the drain
2 station where operators -- where either you have been there
3 or operators have told you, I have one here that we've
4 overfilled?

5 A I would say both. I have -- I usually go out in
6 shipping at least once or twice a shift regardless of
7 whether they got problems or not, and I know I've seen
8 where they were evacuating the cylinder back. It was maybe
9 excess of 100, 200 pounds over, and there's a possibility I
10 have seen one more, but I can't give no specifics on it.

11 Q Okay, but in those instances where you have seen
12 it, have they gone ahead and evacuated back to the
13 appropriate weight or --

14 A Supposed to. I didn't stay there until it was
15 completed.

16 Q But you saw them evacuating?

17 A I seen them evacuating.

18 Q You knew what they were doing?

19 A I even watched the evacuating, the draining when
20 an operator had to go do work elsewhere in the field
21 because I didn't like for them to leave the drain station.

22 Q Have you -- I'm asking you what you have heard
23 now. This would be rumor or hearsay. Have you heard
24 either talk among the shift supervisors or among chemical
25 operators that they too have experienced overfills at the

1 drain station which they have been required or have set
2 about to evacuate back to the appropriate weight?

3 A I have heard rumors other than what I have just
4 stated.

5 Q Have you ever heard of anyone carrying an
6 overfilled cylinder other than that hundred pounds that
7 we've already established was routinely being carried to
8 the steam chest that was not evacuated out as we were
9 discussing earlier, have you heard of any amounts greater
10 than that going to the steam chest?

11 A Let me get my mind straight. Ask that again,
12 would you?

13 Q Besides the 100- or 120-pound overages --

14 A I remember the question now.

15 Q -- that we've already established here, have you
16 ever heard of anybody knowingly taking a cylinder to the
17 steam chest that was in excess of that 100 or 120 pounds?

18 A Not knowingly taking it to the steam chest, but
19 I have been told that they have been taken out of the steam
20 chest and when they weighed them to evacuate that they were
21 over.

22 Q What would be the most you have ever heard of
23 that you have been told was over the gross amount?

24 A The only figure in the back of my mind was
25 either 400 or 700 that John Swimmer, I think was the

1 supervisor had stated that he had -- I think I'm right on
2 that --

3 Q I think we talked about this briefly before we
4 went on the record here and you said that this overfill
5 that you are discussing now occurred before 1985.

6 A To my knowledge, that's right.

7 Q Although you didn't know specifically when.

8 A That's right, and I think it was -- I believe
9 the question was asked a while ago which would verify
10 before '85 if it was a 14-ton CAPCOs, that I remember those
11 have been setting out there at least two years, 14-ton
12 CAPCOs, at least two years, maybe longer than that.

13 Q And understanding it was that particular
14 cylinder?

15 A I believe to the best of my knowledge that's a
16 cylinder I think that was in discussion.

17 Q Leon, do you know whether your shift supervisors
18 are generally aware that these hundred-pound overages that
19 we've talked about previously, do you think they were aware
20 that they were going to the steam chest?

21 A I feel that they probably feel like I feel. I
22 feel like that they wasn't really knowledgeable of it until
23 this incident occurred. Now this is my personal feeling,
24 and I'm stating as how I feel, that they had given it no
25 thought.

1 Q Do you think it was -- let me restate this: Do
2 you have any explanation or has anybody ever offered you an
3 explanation as to why the chemical operators more or less
4 drifted away from evacuating that hundred pounds at the
5 drain station?

6 A What I have been told -- and I have seen it on
7 days that they were called off to do another job while
8 draining was going on, and I stated a while ago that I have
9 watched the draining for them. I've watched evacuation for
10 them while they went to another area to do a short job.

11 Q Okay. I think based on your answer you may have
12 misunderstood my question. As I told you earlier, we found
13 that essentially every operator out here was going to the
14 steam chest with 100 to 120 pounds over as a matter of
15 course. They were not evacuating that hundred pounds at
16 the drain station. Has anybody ever offered you an
17 explanation as to how the operators and supervisors drifted
18 away from the procedure that required 100-pound evacuation
19 at the drain station?

20 A Okay, I feel that that happened years back. I
21 believe that -- if I'm following you right -- that we had a
22 problem with high vapor pressure in the cylinder by having
23 excess amount of 100 pounds in it, and evacuating prior to
24 sampling will get rid of some of the HF, and --

25 Q Is that why the procedure was established, to

1 get rid of that excess?

2 A Yes, sir, yes.

3 Q Why did people quit doing the evacuation?

4 A Well, I think from -- that, sir, I could not
5 answer. I should have --

6 BY MR. DRISKILL:

7 Q I think in our discussion you said that some
8 years ago, as you recall, there was a memo or a letter or
9 some sort of instruction to begin putting that 100 pounds
10 in above the maximum allowable into the cylinder and then
11 placing it in the steam chest and then finally evacuating
12 it at the scale room in order that there would be an ample
13 overage in the cylinder to do the required evacuation to
14 take gases off and to get your sample and still come as
15 close to the maximum allowable level as possible. Is that
16 not correct?

17 A That's correct, and the maximum allowable, I
18 might add that I believe the old procedure, I don't think
19 the old procedure stated -- it may have stated 21,030, but
20 there was occasions when cylinders would come through with,
21 like, 18,000, 19,000 pounds in them, and they stipulated --
22 they, I mean this was -- I was a shift supervisor, I think,
23 or right after, I can't recall when that transportation
24 costs, and this may have been since I have been the area
25 supervisor when they wanted to get as close to maximum net

1 as possible for transportation costs and that's one -- I
2 would say that's when we actually started overfilling the
3 cylinders before evacuating them out.

4 Q Would it be logical to assume that this practice
5 became a very habitual thing and everybody just since that
6 time believed that's the way they were supposed to do it
7 and nobody in supervision ever recognized that it was maybe
8 a continuing practice and it just continued up to 1986?

9 A That's my belief.

10 BY MR. GRIFFIN:

11 Q Leon, based on your knowledge as an area
12 supervisor, is it your understanding that the figures
13 entered on the cylinder status sheet by the chemical
14 operators are generally accurate figures? Do they
15 generally stand for -- under the gross and net weights,
16 that actually -- that they had actually measured?

17 A The final net is accurate, but some of the other
18 figures up there that could have been taken before the
19 scales -- I'll put my glasses on if I need to see them --
20 but for instance, when you get a cylinder to get your final
21 weight on it, you use a test, full test weight cylinder to
22 calibrate the scales. The weights prior to the final
23 weight, the scales are not calibrated with a full test, so
24 they could vary a few pounds.

25 Q Okay, but what I'm really asking you, I guess,

1 is: Do you think that the operators are being truthful and
2 accurate to within the best of their ability to use the
3 scales to measure? Do these figures represent actual
4 weights that they have seen registered on the scales that
5 represent true weights as weighed by those scales?

6 A The majority of them, I would say that's correct.
7 The reason I say the majority of them, I've had -- couldn't
8 give no specifics or names, but there's a time or two that
9 people that we ship the cylinders to, the weights would
10 vary and usually when they varied like 30 pounds, I was
11 made knowledgeable of it, and I would discuss it with the
12 supervisor or an operator to be damn sure that the scales
13 are calibrated when they are weighing, but that has
14 happened.

15 Q Those are the scales in the scale room?

16 A Right.

17 Q So basically what you are saying, you were
18 notified by a customer that a cylinder may have exceeded
19 the gross --

20 A I wouldn't say exceeded the gross. Our final
21 weight versus their final weight was in error, and they
22 have -- I have got cylinder sheets such as that through
23 with the final net on them and I recall one incident one
24 pound over. I routed it back to the supervisor and
25 required them to evacuate that one pound out, because -- I

1 mean, that's happened two or three times.

2 Q I'm going to show you a copy here of a blank
3 cylinder status sheet. It has both the front and back.
4 And could you identify for the record those portions of the
5 front and back which you reviewed as the area supervisor
6 when these come to you?

7 A Okay, the front page I look at the sample
8 results, the final net weight, and I look at the date the
9 sample was taken versus five days prior to cooldown there,
10 prior to shipping or preparing to ship. I usually -- I
11 don't look at it every time, but they usually have a
12 printed card where they show the full test cylinder and et
13 cetera up there, there's two or three of those. If I
14 didn't I look at the cylinder number, I look at the
15 analysis, the final weights, and then I look at the back of
16 it, I make sure the hydrostatic date is correct, make sure
17 -- I have a lot of trouble with some of the operators not
18 having -- I have in the past, and I think I have corrected
19 that, not completely filling out the back.

20 I look at all the inspections part on it from,
21 like, physical damage from the valves all the way down to
22 the skirt for bent. I make sure the quality assurance man
23 has approved it. I make sure an operator has approved it,
24 and I have had occasions where the operator has failed to
25 even sign it and I had to do research to try to find out

1 who actually signed it. Some of them has my name on it,
2 and if they have changed any parts I have to look as to why
3 they changed them, make sure they got the lot number on the
4 parts, and the time and date that it was done, and I follow
5 them all the way across to where it says cylinder been
6 inspected by production after being filled which they are
7 supposed to inspect the cylinder after it has been filled,
8 and then the other part is blank until the final
9 preparation for shipping is made by a production person and
10 quality assurance, which is all signed out.

11 Then I'm saying these sheets comes through after
12 they are shipped off, so that's when I look to make sure
13 that this part here is even filled out. This part here I
14 usually am aware of because I'm involved a lot of times on
15 the cylinder being inspected by production and quality
16 assurance prior to being shipped. That's where we check
17 the vacuum, any physical damage, make sure the plug or the
18 valve has the right amount of threads, et cetera, on it.
19 It is signed and dated here, and then the operator when he
20 ships it, after it has been loaded on the truck, he signs
21 this, and this is one of the parts that the operators has
22 left blank several times.

23 Q That is titled "the cylinder being inspected by
24 production after being loaded"?

25 A Right, and I've had to route that back and get

1 it filled out.

2 Q At what point in this review process that you
3 have just described does your signature go on the cylinder
4 status sheet?

5 A When it comes through after -- it used to be --
6 this is my interpretation of it. I think we discussed it
7 earlier, but when the sheet comes through with the front of
8 it completely filled out, I initial it or sign it, then it
9 is passed on up through production, quality assurance and
10 then goes to the accounting department.

11 Q Is this back portion filled out or is that yet
12 to come?

13 A It is filled out to this part here, to cylinder
14 being inspected after being filled.

15 Q Leon, have you ever had occasion to settle
16 disagreements or disputes among your shift supervisors over
17 problems that they experienced with their separate shifts?

18 A I would almost be afraid to venture to answer
19 that. I do recall -- I don't know particular names, but I
20 have talked to one or maybe another, maybe a couple of them
21 about I felt like that they should have got a job done a
22 little faster instead of leaving it to another shift. I
23 mean, usually when I get a complaint, I try to pick my time
24 and place to discuss it with the guy.

25 Q But the shift supervisors do come to you to

1 settle disputes?

2 A Sometimes they do. I mean, it is a rarity. It
3 is not nothing come Monday. Because I have had the
4 supervisors tell me something and I'll say, well, I'll
5 pursue it, and I've had them say, well, I'll take care of
6 it myself, you know, and -- because it is a lot better for
7 them to take care of it themselves without a third party
8 unless it is necessary.

9 Q When did you first see or become aware of
10 Revision 6 to N280-1?

11 A I felt like that it was later than the date on
12 it. Now personally I felt like it was at a later date.

13 Q Didn't you say you reviewed it before it was
14 issued?

15 A Yes, sir, the Revision 5, I did.

16 Q How about Revision 6?

17 A I did that also, and made a couple changes, but
18 I don't know the date. Okay, I had seen it.

19 Q You knew it was coming?

20 A But it wasn't final or approved or anything.

21 Q Who does the approval?

22 A Okay, let's see, the old ones, the plant manager,
23 I believe it was. This one I think Dave Swaney, since
24 quality assurance is in and he finalized it, I'm reasonably
25 sure that his name is on it.

1 Q Okay, after Swaney approved it, how soon did you
2 see it?

W 3 A That was quite a while ago. Time passes so fast,
4 I was reasonably sure it was a month, I say a month later
5 date, but I could be mistaken.

6 Q A month later than the date of issue?

7 A A month later than that. I mean, that's just
8 -- time passes so fast I was sure -- but like I said, I was
9 working on several procedures and that procedure had been
10 revised like three times.

11 Q So that would put it sometime like February '85?

12 A Or later. That's just -- I'm probably wrong on
13 it, but I was thinking it was at a much later date than
14 what it stated on the procedure.

15 Q Was it your responsibility to distribute this
16 procedure to your shift supervisors?

17 A I never had done it on any other procedure.

18 Q Who distributes procedures to the shift
19 supervisors?

20 A Usually when it comes back one of the
21 secretaries or a clerk -- receptionist, they will Xerox X
22 number of copies off, however much the list is, and they
23 themselves distribute it. They even bring mine to me.

24 Q Did you ever have occasion to have safety
25 meetings or instructional meetings with shift supervisors

1 and chemical operators which you attended in which this
2 procedure was discussed?

3 A Not this procedure, no.

4 Q I think before we went on the record, Leon, you
5 made reference to your knowledge of this Department of
6 Energy procedure, or I'm not sure what this is --

7 A ORO-651? Yes.

8 Q Revision 4. That is a guide, is it, to the
9 handling of these cylinders?

10 A Yes, you could say that, yes. I think that's a
11 description of them. The feel of them. I don't know
12 whether I can recall the cubic feet in them or not. Seemed
13 like a 14-ton was 205. Depends on the temperature of them.

14 Q Do you know if Kerr-McGee follows the
15 recommendations or the information contained in this
16 document in preparation of its procedures?

17 A They do now. In the past, I think they thought
18 they were when they initialed the 21,030 weight. Otherwise,
19 they had to have somebody do a lot of calculating to see
20 what was safe limits on it.

21 Q Do you think they were referring to this
22 document to come up with that figure?

23 A I do now. Like I said, I never had seen that
24 book. When I was shift supervisor I hadn't seen it, and I
25 would be giving you just a rough estimate date. I would

1 say approximately a year to 15 months ago when I got a copy
2 and started thumbing through it, but I knew that they were
3 on site. I had seen the cover of them like in the
4 accounting department or --

5 Q Leon, did you ever witness yourself instances
6 where the cart in the drain room was off the rail or not
7 sitting on the rail properly?

8 A No, as far as just visually looking at it I
9 cannot recall seeing it. I was aware of it.

10 Q Were you aware this was a continuing problem
11 over the years or since they had been handling 14-ton
12 cylinders?

13 A 14-ton cylinders, best of my knowledge, the
14 initial filling of them, we had had a problem, and since I
15 have been over in this area I cannot recall any feedback.
16 I knew it was close tolerance, in the back of my mind. But
17 like I said, it slipped my mind, but I should have been
18 aware of it and I should have initiated action on it.

19 MR. GRIFFIN: I want to go off the record for a
20 minute.

21 (Discussion off the record.)

22 MR. GRIFFIN: Back on the record. Driskill and
23 I have had a brief discussion here about the form that this
24 transcript would take as relates to asking and answering
25 questions. Don has related to me he has some questions

1 about Revision 6 that I passed over too quickly, so let's
2 go back to Revision 6 and complete that.

3 BY MR. DRISKILL:

4 Q You said that when you reviewed Revision 6 prior
5 to it being issued, you made some changes to it. Could you
6 tell me what those changes might have been?

7 A There's one specific that I recall, and how I
8 recall that, I had a rough draft of the Revision 5, and it
9 said the Revision 5 -- now this is really the only point or
10 only definite point of where I changed. It said draining
11 should be stopped when the maximum net or maximum fill
12 limit reaches 100 pounds over. It said it "should be"
13 stopped. I changed it to "must." I even have the notation
14 on the old copy that I have still.

15 Q Then when you saw Revision 6 it already had
16 those cautionary notes in there about do not overfill, do
17 not heat?

18 A I don't think it did. I don't think Revision 5
19 had that.

20 Q I'm saying Revision 6. I'm talking about
21 Revision 6.

22 A Okay, you asked me about -- I thought you said
23 -- okay, Revision 5 is where I made some changes. Revision
24 6 I didn't see it until it came out finalized.

25 Q You didn't have an opportunity to review that

1 prior?

2 A I'll take that back. I think I did go through
3 it and okay, you're right, I'm sure I did. That I had took
4 Revision 5, I had had an extra copy of it, I had made a few
5 notes in it, and then Revision 6 come through and I checked
6 my notes on Revision 5 against Revision 6, and they had
7 been changed to my satisfaction and Revision 6 had the "do
8 not heat overfilled cylinders" in it.

9 Q Could you tell me who drafted Revision 6?

10 A Dave Swaney, as far as I'm concerned. I'm not
11 sure. He's the one that finalized it.

12 Q Did you have an opportunity to ask him why he
13 was supervising it?

14 A On that overfilling or heating an overfilled
15 cylinder?

16 Q That was the major change to it, wasn't it?

17 A Yes, it was the major change, right. Another
18 change I think I recall making on it, if I had 5 and 6, I
19 believe 5 still stated to leave the valve cover over the
20 valve on it, and that was another one of my concerns
21 because every accident that we've had was a valve getting
22 knocked off. It wouldn't get knocked off if the valve
23 cover had not been in place, and I believe Revision 6
24 deleted that part also.

25 Q Did you ask him to put that back in?

1 A No, I had asked him to leave the valve cover off
2 of the cylinder until it was the final preparation for it
3 to be shipped, when QA got through with it, then it was
4 installed.

5 Q But with respect to the notes in there about not
6 heating an overfilled cylinder, did you perchance happen to
7 ask Swaney why he was putting that in there and where he
8 had come up with the idea to include that in there?

9 A No, I didn't. At that time, sir, I had read --
10 I believe is OR-651, I think. I think I had read that in
11 there, and I was sure -- I'm pretty sure that's where I
12 read it, but I read it, and I was sure that he had seen it
13 and added it for safety precautions. To me I thought it
14 was a good deal. If it had just dawned on me to make sure
15 everybody was aware of it.

16 Q I guess with the wide spectrum of things that go
17 on in the plant -- I recognize that we're focusing on just
18 one area, but there's a lot of things that go on there and
19 probably a whole lot of procedures?

20 A You bet, yes.

21 Q And consequently, for one individual to be
22 reviewing all of these changes, that would be almost a
23 full-time job in itself?

24 A It is.

25 Q And I preface what I'm going to ask you with

1 that, but do you know if Joe Davenport reads all these
2 changes?

3 A No, sir, I don't; I couldn't answer that.

4 Q Do you think that he is aware of what the
5 procedures say with respect to these various areas or in
6 particular with the shipping department?

7 A I couldn't be aware if he didn't read them, and
8 I can't say whether he reads them or not. I couldn't say.
9 His office is separate from mine.

10 Q Yes, but I mean just based on -- first of all,
11 my question was: Do you think he reads all the revisions?
12 Are they sent to them, do you know whether they are or not?

13 A I wouldn't know.

14 Q But based on the large volume of procedural
15 changes, you wouldn't expect him to read them all?

16 A No, I don't read them all. I mean, I basically
17 try to keep up with the one in the area that I'm
18 responsible for, and if I've got any free time, a lot of
19 times when I'm reading them I might flip over and read
20 another one. I usually -- when a revision is made I get a
21 copy most all the time. I wouldn't say I get all of them,
22 but I get a bunch of them and I usually run through them
23 hurriedly, unless I have a lot of time and I scrutinize
24 them, because the original procedures I was quite familiar
25 with, from our early schooling and et cetera, we had to.

1 Q With respect to Mr. Davenport, do you recall on
2 the day of the accident, that January 4, him making a
3 statement to you, to the effect --- I don't know this was
4 the exact words -- that he was not aware of any procedure
5 that forbid heating of cylinders, overfilled cylinders?

6 A I cannot say that I heard him say that. I was
7 fairly excited when I went through the front gate. He
8 stopped me, he was down at the front gate and he told me to
9 -- I believe he said: Get your rear -- or get yourself up
10 there and secure the place. Check it out. That's where I
11 pursued to. The incident -- probably an hour securing the
12 control room, looking at things that the shift on that day
13 had overlooked, and --

14 Q You don't recall him making any such --

15 A I could not truthfully say that.

16 Q You don't remember him saying a statement like
17 that during the next two or three days or questioning you
18 regarding the procedures?

19 A I can't truthfully answer that. I don't recall
20 it. The reason I'm saying that, I was trying to get that
21 day -- I spent -- I don't know what time I got away from
22 the plant that night, and I think the next day I came in I
23 don't know whether I had any, you know, was involved with
24 him that much, and then I went on midnights for three or
25 four nights. I can't recall right off that statement being

1 made.

2 BY MR. GRIFFIN:

3 Q In relation to the subject Don was just asking
4 you about, since the accident, have you heard that
5 particular incident repeated during the times that you have
6 been interviewed or questioned, have you heard --

7 A That question being asked?

8 Q Yes.

9 A No, sir, I think that's the first time I have
10 heard it.

11 Q Following the accident or immediately following
12 the accident, did the shift supervisors provide copies of
13 Rev. 6 to their chemical operators?

14 A That I could not answer. I know they didn't
15 that day. I --

16 Q Did you ever hear a rumor or talk at the plant
17 that a supervisor was placing copies of the procedure in
18 the people's lockers?

19 A No, I haven't heard that rumor. I mean, no
20 names or nothing. I did see a lot of procedures being
21 carried around after that by individuals and that I felt
22 like should have known.

23 Q You didn't place any procedures in anybody's
24 locker immediately following the accident, did you?

25 A No, sir, I did not.

1 BY MR. DRISKILL:

2 Q Are you aware of any procedures being removed
3 from any individual's lockers subsequent to the accident?

4 A No, okay, this is what I was told also, that
5 there was not a procedure of N280-1, Revision 6, found in
6 shipping. I personally know that that procedure had been
7 left in shipping, because, I mean, this is something I
8 don't normally do. I Xeroxed an extra copy of it off and I
9 had it in a pocket, and when I was in the field, I took it
10 to shipping and laid it on the desk. Now, when, I don't
11 recall that. The last time I saw the procedure in shipping
12 was in a little old, thin, black notebook, and I believe it
13 had -- it was stuck in there with QA -- QA-001 and -2. I
14 think it was stuck in that, and I have been told that that
15 procedure was not found in there, so I can't verify that it
16 was in there that day or when it was in there, but I know
17 at one time the procedure was in there.

18 Q Do you know that if immediately subsequent to
19 the accident or in the days subsequent to the accident,
20 during the course of the cleanup did somebody go through
21 lockers and take some stuff in there that had gotten
22 contaminated and discard it?

23 A I would say they did. My personal desk, my
24 office desk got ransacked. My clothes locker in the change
25 room got the lock cut off of it. I got missing out of my

1 desk -- I have no idea, and somebody didn't give a damn or
2 almost got caught because my individual folders, the stuff
3 was removed from them and just put in the front of the desk
4 drawer. And one thing that was missing was a brand new
5 torque wrench out of my clothes locker that I had gotten a
6 few months back to try to check the torque on the cylinder
7 valve to see how much pounds it would take before I twisted
8 it and somebody stole it.

9 Q But with respect to that, obviously somebody
10 without being authorized went apparently through some
11 people's desks and lockers?

12 A Okay, I think Bill Bradley told me that somebody
13 went through his, and I think Leroy Reid told me that
14 somebody had went through his. I believe that's the two
15 that stated that, but my desk had been ransacked prior to
16 this incident and I don't understand why it was done. My
17 desk is left open. The supervisors I told: if they need
18 anything in my desk, it is open. They are welcome to it so,
19 the supervisors knew it was open. Why would they ransack
20 it? I wouldn't have left nothing in there. I don't hide
21 nothing in there, but I didn't have nothing in there
22 personally.

23 BY MR. GRIFFIN:

24 Q Leon, do you know of any problems that any of
25 the chemical operators or shift supervisors experience with

1 the scales in either the drain station or the scale room?

2 A I don't know whether we talked a while back, but
3 the north one -- I don't know how long back ago it was -- I
4 had gotten a report that it hung at a certain weight and
5 drained a little bit more in it when a little more weight
6 was added, and it may make a jump and then it would work
7 proper.

8 Q Did you take the responsibility of seeing that
9 that was fixed?

10 A I think I took the responsibility, I believe.
11 The accounting department usually calls the scales people
12 out; and as far as I know it was corrected.

13 Q Had you ever heard of problems with the scales
14 resulting in any overfills?

15 A Not to my knowledge, I haven't.

16 Q Leon, is Davenport familiar with the day-to-day
17 operations of the plant?

18 A My personal opinion? -- and this is strictly
19 mine, I don't think so.

20 Q I know we discussed a few moments ago his
21 knowledge of the procedures. Based on your daily contact
22 with Mr. Davenport, if you asked him about the details of
23 some procedure as it applied to the day to day operations,
24 have his verbal responses to you led you to believe that he
25 understands how these procedures are implemented in the

1 day-to-day operation?

2 A Probably he could take a procedure, read it and
3 tell you how to do it, but actually doing it according to
4 procedure, I got my doubts.

5 Q In other words, he's smart enough to read it,
6 interpret it and understand it; but if I'm understanding
7 you correctly he doesn't walk around with that information
8 in his head.

9 A I'm sure -- well, speculation, I'm no authority
10 to answer that, but my opinion, I got my doubts.

11 Q Leon, prior to going on the record, we discussed
12 a decision that had come to our attention while we have
13 been conducting this investigation regarding the five-day
14 cool-down period that is specified, I believe, in the
15 procedure. We asked you if you knew of any instances where
16 the vacuum was taken on a cylinder before the fifth day,
17 and I believe you said you were aware of such instances.

18 A Yes.

19 Q In those instances, have there been dates that
20 were postdated on the cylinder status record to reflect a
21 date which encompassed a full five-day wait period?

22 A Yes, I'm knowledgeable of it, but not since
23 quality assurance has went into effect where this is not a
24 final preparation of the cylinder being shipped.

25 Q Would the instances where dates on the cylinder

1 status sheet were postdated, was this in response to
2 production demands to clear the pad of too many cylinders?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Was Mr. Davenport aware of the postdating?

5 A No, sir.

6 Q Was anybody above you aware of the postdating?

7 A No, sir.

8 Q Did the chemical operators postdate the cylinder
9 status sheets at your instructions?

10 A I did not give instructions. I was aware of it,
11 and I'm not familiar -- we'll have to go back over it again.
12 I don't know where they dated them. I know --

13 Q I'm speaking specifically of the difference
14 between the date when the sample would have been taken
15 versus the date that they were -- the last date on the far
16 left side of the cylinder status sheet where it indicates
17 that it was prepared to ship.

18 A That is in question. I don't want to go on the
19 record as stating that I knew prior to -- after quality
20 assurance went into effect, the operators had not given any
21 thought or were knowledgeable where they wrote down
22 "prepared to ship" because the cylinder is not prepared to
23 ship when they get through with it.

24 Q Yes. As I said before, we discussed this off
25 the record and we understood that that new answer is not --

1 doesn't completely explain exactly what's going to happen.
2 In other words, you are saying that quality assurance is
3 going to have a reinspection of the vacuum, the vacuum is
4 going to be taken again before it is shipped?

5 A Right.

6 Q But the part that I'm trying to only briefly
7 focus on here, there have been instances based on what you
8 have told us where chemical operators did not wait the full
9 five days, the vacuum was taken at an earlier date and the
10 cylinder status sheets in some instances have been
11 postdated.

12 A I'm not trying to argue or anything, but the
13 vacuum check has no bearing -- you've got to meet a certain
14 vacuum for the cylinder to be able to prepare it to ship,
15 but for for the vacuum check itself, there's shifts that I
16 know goes out and checks vacuums on every cylinder that's
17 sitting on the pad.

18 Q I think I understand what you are saying, Leon.
19 Let me restate it this way. Do you know of instances where
20 the cylinder status sheet has been postdated for the
21 purpose of clearing the cylinder from the end process
22 status over into the shipping area?

23 A Indirectly, that would be the reason that it was
24 postdated, because directly, the paperwork does not go
25 through until the five days is up. The cylinder has been

1 done that way where it will get processed through as soon
2 as the five-day cool-down is up, and that is to keep the
3 end process UF-6 in and also keep the pad from being so
4 congested, right.

5 Q Well, was this postdating done with the belief
6 or understanding or expectation that by sending this over
7 to the shipping department, clearing the pads, sending it
8 to the clearing department -- was this with the knowledge
9 that that cylinder was not going to be leaving the site for
10 several more days at minimum?

11 A That's correct. You won't find a sheet that has
12 went to the accounting department, I don't believe, without
13 the five-day cool-down period.

14 Q Do you know if any of the chemical operators or
15 any of the shift supervisors have either refused to
16 postdate a cylinder status sheet or have complained about
17 being made to postdate a cylinder status sheet?

18 A I don't think any of them has been made to
19 postdate.

20 Q Have they been asked to do it?

21 A I don't believe I have asked them. Like I said,
22 I'm aware of it.

23 Q Somebody is asking them. You would agree to
24 that, wouldn't you?

25 A Apparently so.

1 Q Who is it most likely to be?

2 A It would most likely be me or the supervisor,
3 but I don't recall ever telling anybody to postdate them.
4 I've told them to ask me and then their interpretation, get
5 them ready to ship in three days, if it was a good vacuum
6 on it; and I have told them -- I don't recall exactly -- I
7 said the procedure calls for five days but they are not --
8 I was aware and they was not going to the accounting
9 department until they have had five days; and this was like
10 I stated before, in the past this was the final draft, the
11 last year; plus the cylinder is not ready to ship if it has
12 not been prepared to ship when the front part is filled out.

13 Q I understand what you are saying. On a
14 different subject, Leon, have you ever caught anybody on
15 shift playing cards or checkers while they were supposed to
16 be working?

17 A No. It is possible, but the only time that it
18 would have occurred other than our lunch break, like you
19 said, when they were supposed to be working would be on a
20 holiday or when the plant was shut down, when the plant was
21 manned with a skeleton crew and they might have infringed a
22 little longer on their lunch period or something.

23 Q Have you ever heard of a chemical operator who
24 was draining into a cylinder leaving his station or leaving
25 the drain to go play cards or checkers?

1 A No, sir, I have not.

2 Q Have you ever heard of any cylinder being
3 overfilled as a result of an operator playing cards or
4 checkers or leaving a station to do something other than
5 work?

6 A No, I have not.

7 Q Leon, is it common for chemical operators in the
8 shipping department to be assigned other duties in addition
9 to their normal duties in filling cylinders?

10 A Yes, sir, it is normal.

11 Q Is it common for these duties to cause them to
12 leave the drain station?

13 A That's correct. I'll give you one instance. We
14 have X number of operators to cover X numbers of positions
15 or areas in the plant. They work eight hours, there's no
16 relief operators. People are entitled to eat, so the
17 operator has to double up in the area that's vacant when
18 somebody goes to eat, and therefore, he's doing two
19 people's work at the same time.

20 Q Do you know of any instances where a cylinder
21 was overfilled because an operator was performing some work
22 at a location remote to the drain station?

23 A I don't know. I have been told. Personally
24 knowing, this knowledge, I have been told.

25 BY MR. DEISKILL:

1 Q Let me ask you one question relative to the
2 topic we were discussing a few minutes ago that had to do
3 with the cylinder status sheets and this business about the
4 production personnel checking the vacuum prior to waiting
5 the required five days. In instances where this was done
6 and the cylinder met the required vacuum, once that was
7 done, was the status sheet then sent to accounting?

8 A No. If I have covered you right -- let me
9 rephrase what I said a while ago. We may have 20 cylinders
10 out there; the operator will get his vacuum gauge and
11 wrenches. We may have a cylinder that's been there three
12 or four days, but when he's checking the rest of them he
13 goes by and checks the one that has been there three days
14 to see if it has a vacuum. If it has a vacuum the next
15 night he don't have to check the vacuum in the field. He
16 can pick it up, bring it in the scale room, check the
17 vacuum and therefore he don't have to go back.

18 Well, the vacuums are checked out on the pad,
19 and in nights it is kind of dark out there so if they get
20 an opportunity to check the vacuums, if one has been there
21 three days and it has, say, 10, 11 sections of vacuum on it,
22 the next night he doesn't have to check the vacuum on the
23 pad. He can bring it inside where it is dry or warm or
24 cool, whatever, and check the vacuum, get the final weight
25 and everything like that.

1 Q Well, for those cylinders which have been on the
2 pad for five days, once that vacuum is checked, is the
3 paperwork, the status sheet and the other paperwork sent to
4 accounting?

5 A Yes. I hope I'm following you.

6 Q I'm just asking what happens to the paperwork.
7 Those that have been there five days, he checks the vacuum,
8 if it meets the required vacuum, 10 inches or more, it is
9 then sent to accounting.

10 A Right.

11 Q For those which are checked after four days, and
12 the vacuum is greater than 10 inches, is the paperwork also
13 sent to accounting?

14 A Oh, no, not four days. I make sure that it is
15 five days before they get it.

16 Q Okay, so all we're talking about is that the
17 vacuum, the date the vacuum is checked, whether the vacuum
18 is checked in three days or five days, that's where --

19 A I think I'm following you, but the accounting
20 department doesn't -- like I said, the accounting
21 department does not get these sheets until they have had at
22 least five days on them.

23 MR. GRIFFIN: Let's go off the record for a
24 minute.

25 (Discussion off the record.)

1 MR. GRIFFIN: Back on the record.

2 We discussed briefly the fact that the concern
3 that we were questioning Leon about on this related
4 primarily to the postdating of the record rather than any
5 relationship between the postdating and the date that the
6 vacuum was taken on a cylinder. Leon has explained to us,
7 if I understand correctly, that the vacuum might be taken
8 at an earlier date and then later an operator, knowing that
9 there was sufficient vacuum on that cylinder after the
10 fifth day, might pick the cylinder up and bring it in for
11 further processing. The only concern that we were
12 exploring -- and I think Leon has been straightforward and
13 candid with us about this -- is a procedural problem with
14 postdating, and we have explored that to the satisfaction
15 of the NRC, I believe.

16 THE WITNESS: I hope.

17 BY MR. GRIFFIN:

18 Q Leon, are there any problems which you
19 identified to the Kerr-McGee attorneys that we have not
20 discussed with you, potential safety problems or procedural
21 problems that the NRC should be aware of?

22 A The only thing that was my concern, and that I
23 believe I stated to Kerr-McGee officials -- and I don't
24 know whether I said it to NRC or not -- my concern was an
25 empty cylinder sitting down on the pad for X number of days

1 or weeks with a hard vacuum on it, it could be very easily
2 sabotaged.

3 Q Has there ever been an instance that that has
4 occurred?

5 A We don't know. I mean, for instance, in the
6 past, cylinders would come back, the seals on the valve
7 covers are loosened. Since QA started they come back with
8 a seal on the valve cover, but they are removed, and I have
9 seen cylinders that lay several months with 20-plus inches
10 of vacuum on it, and a person who does just a little bit of
11 homework could inject a type of liquid in one in probably
12 five seconds and be gone.

13 Q I see what you mean.

14 A When you put, for instance, just say water for
15 instance, put a gallon of water in there, what are you
16 looking at, less than 8-1/2 pounds? Do you think they
17 would probably not detect it on the tare weight because it
18 had a heal in it to start with, and probably there's a
19 substance that would react or a type of liquid would react
20 with the UF-6 much more violent than water, so that is my
21 concern and kind of been my concern for a pretty good while.

22 Q All right. Let me ask you a question in a
23 different area. Do you know who John Stauter is?

24 A Okay, I know him, not real good.

25 Q Do you know what his job is?

1 A Is it something about environmental or health
2 physics or --

3 Q I think his title -- I have a document that has
4 his title as director of nuclear licensing and regulation.

5 A I have been told, but I couldn't recall.

6 Q I'm telling you this. In January -- on January
7 29, 1986, Stauter prepared a letter which he sent to the
8 NRC, and it was in response to certain questions that the
9 NRC had placed to Kerr-McGee related to the accident and
10 other things. My question to you is, prior to January 29,
11 did Mr. Stauter ever consult with you, talk with you, call
12 you on the phone, write you a memo, write a memo to
13 everybody in which he asked you or gathered information
14 from you in preparation to respond to the NRC?

15 A I don't recall it, no.

16 Q Would you remember something like that?

17 A It depends on how he asked me or would have
18 asked me. I'm sure he didn't. It is possible, but I don't
19 think so, because I talked to so damn many people --

20 Q This is in a 20- or 25-day period between the
21 accident and the 28th of January --

22 A I don't think so.

23 Q If Stauter called and asked you a bunch of
24 questions about the accident wouldn't you remember that?

25 A I believe I would.

1 Q And you have no such recollection?

2 A I can't recall it.

3 Q Did anybody else in supervision above you like
4 Davenport or Mr. Utnage or any other managers on site here
5 above you in the chain solicit information from you in
6 preparation to respond to questions from the NRC?

7 A No.

8 (Discussion off the record.)

9 MR. GRIFFIN: Back on the record.

10 BY MR. GRIFFIN:

11 Q Leon, following the accident -- I'm sorry, prior
12 to the accident, did you have occasion to be called at home
13 by Bill Bradley, receive a telephone call from Bill Bradley
14 related to a situation he was handling at the plant? This
15 is just prior to the accident.

16 A The situation -- yes, I received a call.

17 Q Could you give me the substance of that
18 conversation?

19 A The substance, as I recall, and I'm quite sure,
20 he had called me about a high chrome cylinder, that's an
21 off-spec cylinder that was being evacuated to a cold trap,
22 and I had stated in the daily operating instructions the
23 instructions as to how to handle that, and we had several
24 of them. Like seven or eight, I believe it was, and he had
25 called me wanting to know if I wanted to continue to

1 evacuate high chrome, that they had blended that one
2 cylinder and had another one in the southeast steam chest
3 where we evacuated from; and I told him, no, that I had
4 left instructions to blend 2000 pounds, it is in the daily
5 operating instructions, 2000 pounds in the heat cylinder
6 that they had filled because we had so much chrome problems
7 that I wanted to blend it out right before we could get out
8 of that mess, and I asked him how maintenance was doing in
9 hydrofluorination, I believe it was hydrofluorination.

10 They were out there on a Saturday doing some
11 work because we had experienced some mechanical problems,
12 and he said they were doing all right, and I asked him did
13 he have any who are problems that I could help him with and
14 he said, oh -- he said, they left me a cylinder that was
15 overfilled, but he said, I have taken care of -- or I'm
16 taking care of it. He said I didn't call you about that
17 matter or something to that nature, that I called you about
18 the high chrome problem, and as far as I know, that's the
19 extent of our conversation. He could have stated pounds,
20 but I don't remember, because he thinks he stated pounds,
21 and we were asked at the Congressional meeting as to the
22 conversation, and our say on it was just almost identical.

23 Q So your testimony was similar in that you both
24 agreed that you didn't discuss the amount of the overfill --

25 A He stated something about he had said something

1 about the overfill, either 200 or 2000 is I believe the
2 words he used at the Congressional meeting, and it would
3 have been insignificant to me. I was not aware, you know --
4 I mean I wasn't aware he hadn't read the procedure when he
5 told me he had taken care of it or was taking care of it.
6 Nothing dawned on me.

7 Q Reaching back to before the Congressional
8 hearing that you attended, reaching back to that day or
9 that time before the accident, during this phone call, did
10 he give you any indication that this overfilled cylinder
11 was in the steam chest?

12 A I didn't ask and he might have assumed that I
13 thought it was in there; but I was familiar with the
14 procedure, I thought he was also, and I didn't pursue it.

15 Q But the answer would be you didn't have any
16 reason to believe from what he said that it was in the
17 steam chest?

18 A I didn't even give it any thought.

19 Q Leon, have Don or I threatened you in any manner
20 or offered you any rewards in return for this statement?

21 A Off the record, will you all let me use the
22 bathroom? No, you all have been real nice.

23 Q Have you given the statement freely and
24 voluntarily?

25 A I have.

1 Q Is there anything you would care to add to the
2 record?

3 A Yes, I want this here made more clear as to what
4 I was talking about.

5 Q The cylinder status sheet?

6 A About preparing the ship when the final
7 preparation is made, I would like to make that more clear
8 to the operators and the supervisors, apparently.

9 Q This is as a recommendation for a change in the
10 plant operation?

11 A Yes, because basically I mean my feelings toward
12 it, if a cylinder sheet does cross my desk prior to the
13 five days, it still is not prepared to ship until the final
14 checks are made and sealed.

15 Q I think you do understand what the NRC's concern
16 is as to the accuracy of the dates and the information
17 recorded.

18 A Yes.

19 Q Anything else?

20 A No, I can't think of anything.

21 Q I appreciate you talking to us here today.

22 A Believe it or not, I kind of enjoyed it.

23 (Whereupon, at 4:05 p.m., the interview was
24 concluded.)
25

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

This is to certify that the attached proceedings before the UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION in the matter of:

NAME OF PROCEEDING: INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW OF
LEON MCCOY

DOCKET NO.:

PLACE: GORE, OKLAHOMA

DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 1986

were held as herein appears, and that this is the original transcript thereof for the file of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(sig) *Kathie S. Weller*

(TYPED)

KATHIE S. WELLER

Official Reporter

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