

September 24, 1979

Occupation: College student

INTERVIEWER: When did you first hear about the TMI incident?

NARRATOR: I was lucky, my roommate's father used to work down there so she found out before I heard the news all over the school, like maybe that Wednesday whenever it happened. She lives in a town close by there.

INT: You mean Harrisburg?

NAR: Yeah. It's close to Harrisburg.

INT: Did you know that there was a reactor there before this incident?

NAR: No, I'm not that familiar with Pennsylvania.

INT: What did you think at that point?

NAR: Someone was trying to tell us something.

INT: Did you think it was a serious situation?

NAR: I think I thought so, yeah. I think I did.

INT: Did you try to seek any further information?

NAR: Other than it wasn't going to hit Carlisle, no.

INT: From whom did you try to get further information?

NAR: Basically the students, news, radio, whatever.

INT: Did you talk about it with your friends, family?

NAR: Family I tried not to talk about it too much because I don't know... they didn't think anything was going to happen. They didn't know I was that close actually. Friends were always talking about it though.

INT: How did you feel about others' reactions to the incident?

NAR: You mean the students' reactions?

INT: Anybody's.

NAR: Everybody was getting kinda panicky. Everybody was taking off. I didn't leave till that Monday and everybody else was leaving Sunday and everything. It was really panicky.

INT: Did you follow the newspaper and radio?

NAR: Well, I don't buy newspapers, I don't have any money usually, but I followed the radio.

INT: How do you feel that the media itself handled the situation?

NAR: I felt they were really vague about the whole thing. They were making like it was nothing and there was nothing to worry about, you know. A little leakage here and no big deal.

INT: How do you feel that the government officials handled it?

NAR: They didn't want people to panic but I felt they could have told a little more.

INT: How did you feel about Met Ed? How do you think they handled it?

NAR: Horribly.

INT: Did you feel that those in charge of the situation were in control?

NAR: No, I don't think they knew what they were doing. They didn't know how to handle it anyway according to the news and everything. I don't think they knew what they were doing.

INT: Do you feel that those in charge are in control now?

NAR: No, I still don't think they know too much more about it than they did before. I don't think they know what they are doing.

INT: Did you make any plans different than from what you ordinarily would have?

NAR: Well, I went home that Monday. My parents told me to come home. That wasn't planned.

INT: What did you bring with you when you left?

NAR: Myself and my luggage. I didn't think anything was really going to happen up here though. I didn't want to leave when my parents came for me.

INT: Did you have any mental picture of what was happening at TMI?

NAR: Before it happened or while it was happening?

INT: While it was happening?

NAR: I could see people going frantic in Harrisburg. I'm glad we weren't living there.

INT: Do you think that anything that happened at TMI might have affected your health?

NAR: There's a good possibility because we are kinda close and winds do blow and I think there is a very good possibility. We drink milk from there and everything.

INT: If the worst had occurred what do you think might have happened?

NAR: The worst? Things would have blown up there before, we would have gotten it too. Things would just have been contaminated by whatever it was... (unintelligible).

INT: Did you have any concerns about the food and milk from the area?

NAR: I knew that the milk we had already would be stocked so what we were drinking wouldn't have been too bad.

INT: Did you picture in your mind any effects of radiation on the life around you, like nature?

NAR: At that time I really wasn't thinking about that.

INT: Did you think of your own death or the death of others?

NAR: I really wasn't afraid because that's when my religion came in... that's when I was like I disbelieved... somehow I just felt really safe because I didn't think He would let anything happen to me.

INT: So you thought about God during this incident?

NAR: Definitely, no doubt about that.

INT: How did He figure into all of this?

NAR: I thought He did it actually to show man that he was messing with something he didn't know how to deal with. Bigger than his britches, you might say.

INT: Did you pray at all?

NAR: Yes. That's when I got my answer. I prayed and He really gave me an answer and then I wasn't afraid anymore.

INT: Did any Biblical stories or events come to mind?

NAR: No. Well, maybe the flood maybe. That came to mind. I thought that was kinda cute.

INT: Cute, huh? Did any ideas of Satan or the Last Judgment or the end of the world come into mind?

NAR: Not so much the end of the world, just a warning. I saw a warning there. Something like an omen.

INT: Did you attend any religious services during the crisis?

NAR: No, just my own. I have my own religion inside me. I really don't need to attend anyplace.

INT: Did you feel that you had a certain responsibility to this incident whether it be to the community or others?

NAR: Well, the school seemed as if they were forcing the responsibility on us. Like we were to stay up here and show how bad the situation wasn't so you know, we're still here. It seemed like it was being forced on us, that we should stay here and show them that it wasn't as bad as they were making it out to be. Since we are supposed to be so smart and intelligent.

INT: How do you think this has affected you and those around you?

NAR: It was almost laughable but it really wasn't because people were actually scared. They were really panicky and rushing home on the first bus. I can just imagine the bus place when they were leaving. Everyone was like their parents were coming up to take their kids and it was really a mess. I felt sorry for them actually. They didn't have more faith or whatever.

INT: Do you have any ideas of how it would be best to behave in such a situation?

NAR: Just don't panic. Just stay calm, and if you are going to leave, don't really rush it. I think that's worse, everybody trying to get out at one time. Just kinda take your time. Just think about the situation first.

INT: Any type of moral or religious ideas of how to react?

NAR: Well, the first thing that came to me was God so if they really have that friend up there then they can count on Him.

INT: At this time, did this event bring to mind any past experiences or past events?

NAR: Well, other than thinking about the Bible, I thought about when we were in NY we had a flood in Elmira and we moved right after the flood. But other than that I wasn't really thinking about the past too much. The main thing was like Noah and the Ark and this is a warning. That's all I could think of.

INT: Was this incident more or less frightening than a flood or a hurricane?

NAR: When I first saw the people panicking it almost got to me but after I talked to God I was fine. It really didn't bother me.

INT: Did any TV shows or movies come into mind?

NAR: I don't like TV all that much so it really didn't hit me.

INT: Any books or anything?

NAR: Nothing but the Bible and the flood. That's all I can think of.

INT: Did you find yourself daydreaming at all about what was going on?

NAR: Actually, it seemed like a dream once everyone disappeared all around. Everybody leaving the dorm. You have the whole floor to yourself in one day. It was really different. It seemed like a dream so I really didn't have to daydream. It all seemed like some kind of nightmare. Everybody was going crazy.

INT: Did you have any trouble sleeping?

NAR: Well, actually, no.

INT: Did you hear any jokes about radiation or TMI?

NAR: Oh yea. When I went home. The glowing one. Stay away from me, everything. Don't come too close. A lot of little cracks here and there.

INT: What did you think about the joking?

NAR: I thought well, if they were really serious about it, it probably would have bothered me but they weren't. They were just joking and playing. Where I live, they really didn't know how close it was. It was just a joke, basically.

INT: Do you remember any other jokes or anything?

NAR: Nothing right off the bat, I wasn't into listening to jokes then. I just heard things and they went out one ear.

INT: Do you remember any other jokes from any other crisis, say Pearl Harbor or Hiroshima or anything like that?

NAR: None that I can think of.

INT: How do you feel overall about nuclear energy?

NAR: Well, I thin man shouldn't handle anything that... he shouldn't mess with anything that he can't handle. That's my opinion anyway. And I think society can find another way to work, I mean there are other ways of having energy and I think that this isn't safe enough. I don't think they know what they are doing.

INT: Is there anything else that you might want to say?

NAR: No, nothing I can think of.