

Date: September 24, 1979

Occupation: Supervisor, PA Blue Shield

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

NARRATOR: The first time I heard about it was at work. I happened to be at work and it was Wednesday afternoon and one of my employees came up to me with a note stating that there was an emergency situation going on and I should find out definitely since there was no radio or anything available. She just gave me a note and stated that I should find out immediately what was going on.

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

NAR: Not really.

INT: What did you think at this point?

NAR: Well my first impression was somewhat of concern because the young lady that gave me the note was an employee who was not prone to get too excited over things and as a result her note had some reliability to it so that I did feel that I needed to find out what was going on. So I was a little concerned, yes.

INT: Did you think it was a serious situation, almost a crisis?

NAR: At that point, I didn't really know what to think in terms of the severity of the situation. All I knew was that there was something going on and I was unaware of and I thought I should find out about and I was just a little bit concerned as to what was really going on. The degree I really couldn't really pinpoint at that time.

INT: Did you seek any further information?

NAR: Oh yes. At that point I attempted to contact the manager of the section where I work and I also made a couple phone calls to the office of the director of the section of which I work, neither one of these methods at that particular moment were successful. The lines were busy. We were not able to get in contact, so in about an hour I was still in the dark as to what was going on.

INT: Did you talk to your friends, family, co-workers?

NAR: I did go talk with some of my co-workers, some of the other supervisors to find out if they in fact had heard something.

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

NAR: Well, what do you mean?

INT: How do you feel about other peoples' reactions to it?

NAR: Well, for one, I think each person is more or less entitled to their own personal feelings in a situation like this. I look at TMI as an unusual occurrence. Because it was such an unusual occurrence I felt that everybody was entitled to react as they would and I did not really have any negative feeling to what some of the bizarre behavior that was going on. I could more or less understand it, the apprehension and the uncertainty that the people were going through and I think it was a time when there needed to be some understanding and some compassion shown for people that flew off the handle a little bit. Not everyone can handle an unusual occurrence. Their personality and their background lend itself to a situation where they can not function. Period.

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

NAR: I think they had a problem. I think they had a problem, the problem that they had came out later of course, that is, misinformation, a lot of inaccuracies in things that they were stating and I think that on the whole they handled it rather calmly. I don't think that they over exaggerated anything but I do feel that they were at a disadvantage because the information that they gave out was misleading and not always reflective of what was going on. I think they handled it in a rather calm fashion based on the fact that you had a lot of people who were trying to leave and a lot of other things going on.

INT: How do you think the government officials handled it? Or the people at Met Ed?

NAR: Well, I have some bad feelings about Met Ed. They stem from the fact that the policy that they seem to follow at the time that this occurred, of what you don't know, won't hurt you type of thing and I never feel that that is a correct way to handle the situation. I think that you should handled the situation best when you make people aware of what's going on and give them some options. At the same time, I think you do have to be cautious about what you say in order not to raise a panic, but when these kinds of situations occur and it's such an unusual thing, you ought to call for help, if you don't do anything else and I do fault them for not being that mindful enough to do something of that type.

INT: Do you feel that the people down there are in control of the situation now?

NAR: Yeah, I feel that there is much better control now than there was prior to TMI and I think that most of the nuclear plants do have better control now as a result of TMI and what went on. I just feel that sometimes we get involved in things in which with all the control measures that we have we are still not in control of the situation. Because what we are dealing with is something that has an unknown factor. Nobody really knows what can go wrong and what may go wrong and because of all the uncertainties that can occur, we are not in control.

INT: Did you find yourself making any plans different from what you ordinarily... your ordinary routine?

NAR: You know, when you ask me that question I think you have to realize that I'm a very religious person and as a result, a lot of my behaviors and a lot of my decisions as to how I will respond and how I do respond in any given situation no matter how unusual it may be is really geared a lot in my religious belief, and I believe that all things happen together for good for those who are called according to His name and I looked on TMI as a situation where God was just saying "Hey you guys, I got this thing in control, it ain't what you want, it's what I want" and I felt that if it was gonna be a catastrophic situation, then no matter how far I went or what I did, it really wouldn't make that much difference, therefore I was more or less resolved to sit and wait for God to give me some kind of signal as to I want you to go type of thing. So I wasn't really that in a hurry to go anywhere.

INT: Did you have any mental pictures of what was happening at TMI? When they were talking about leaks or bubbles, did you visualize what they were talking about?

NAR: Not really, I was more or less going by the pictures that you'd see and the newspaper. I really didn't know that much about nuclear stations or how it was constructed or anything like that so I really didn't have any pre-ideas of what kind of picture it would look like. But... I just based it basically on what was in the newspaper. I didn't have any fantasies or anything like that.

INT: Did you think that anything that happened at TMI may have affected your health either now or in the future?

NAR: I don't know. It may have. I think that possibility is there and I think it is a real possibility because I don't think any of us really know the effects of radiation on a long term or short term or all those kinds of things and I look around at our children and I notice that you have a 9 and 10 yr old kids that have matured far beyond what you normally see. I know when I was younger, 9 and 10 yr olds kids looked like 9 and 10 yr old kids. They didn't look like they were 14 or 15. And our kids today look like they are 14 or 15 yrs old today and so I don't know. It may be that my health has been affected by that but like I say, God's will will be done.

INT: Did you have any concerns about the food or the milk in that area?

NAR: No, I really didn't

INT: Did you picture in your mind any effects of radiation on nature? Tress, grass, that type of thing?

NAR: No, I didn't. From the information that kept coming out from TMI once the authorities began to get information out, it led me to believe that the amount of radiation that was escaping was not of the type that would cause that kind of damage, but then

again you are not told everything so even though that's the information we receive, I can only hope that it was correct and trust that 10 or 15 yrs from now we don't find out that there was a goof and there was more radiation than what they stated. So you can only go by the information that you receive and based on that, I didn't see that kind of damage going on.

INT: Did you think about God during this incident?

NAR: I always think about God in all instances and as I stated before, I thought He was in full control of the program and I don't think there is anything that was done by man that prevented the catastrophe that occurred out there and I think it was all God's work.

INT: Was there any Biblical stories or events that came to mind to remind you of this?

NAR: No, I didn't have any stories in mind at that time.

INT: Did you feel any certain type of responsibility towards the community or job or whatever?

NAR: Yes, I did. I'm a nurse, first of all and because I am an R.N. I did feel a certain amount of responsibility to make myself available should the need occur, because of that I did call a local Red Cross and try to find out if there was a need and gave them my name so that if they should have a need for someone at the various schools where they would be setting up stations if they had to evacuate the area that I would be available to help.

INT: Do you have any ideas of how it would be best to react in a situation like this?

NAR: I don't think you can really give any pointers to anyone on how to react in a situation of this type because like I said it was such an unusual occurrence, but I think in all emergencies situations, we tell people to remain as calm as possible and to follow the direction of the authority in the emergency situation and I think that's the most that you can do. Anything else is really gonna have to come from that individual when you talk about be calm and don't do this, and don't do that, people are going to do what they feel is best for themselves and their family. The most that you can do is try to encourage them to follow the instructions of the people who are directing the emergency situation. That's the best you can really do.