

Date: August 22, 1979
Occupation: College Student

INTERVIEWER: When did you first hear about the Three Mile Island incident?

NARRATOR: Boy, that's really tough. I do remember. It was in astro class, astronomy. We went in on I guess it was Wednesday. People had been saying something about reactions in class, before class started. I guess that's how I heard. Then Thursday, I didn't pay much attention to it on Wednesday. Then Thursday I heard that, on the radio, that's when it was, I heard on the radio on Wednesday. And then somebody said something about it in class. And then Thursday, I kept hearing on the radio more about it.

INT: Do you remember what it was you heard in class?

NAR: Well, it was just a passing remark about somebody said something about well, they've had problems at Three Mile Island. They were just talking about it and I overheard them.

INT: Did you know what Three Mile Island was?

NAR: Yeah, then I did. Cause I had heard on the radio about it. But before that I had no idea. I don't ever really think I had any idea it was there. I'd seen the cooling towers going by on the train.

INT: Did you know they were cooling towers?

NAR: No, I had no idea what they were. Didn't know how far away it was or anything.

INT: Thank you.

NAR: Now of course I do. Everybody does.

INT: How far away is it?

NAR: 23 miles. Though I've heard everything from 20 to 35. 23.

INT: What did you think when you first heard it?

NAR: Well, Wednesday when we first heard about it on the radio it didn't really mean a whole lot to me. I figured, well, another goof made by mankind. Science of mankind. And then, after that, I guess Thursday, I started finding it curious, I wasn't quite. It didn't really bother me. I was going along as usual. But I started to think about it a little bit. And listened to the radio to see what they had to say about it.

INT: Were you becoming concerned at that point?

NAR: No. I don't think I was every really concerned about it. I didn't really get nervous or anything like that. I got caught up in the excitement of the whole thing.

INT: So you felt that way throughout the whole incident?

NAR: Pretty much, yeah.

INT: So your attitude didn't really change?

NAR: I started to think that Friday in class, astro class again, everybody said okay physics professor "What's going on over there? What kind of things are happening?" He explained a little bit of what it was. And I think it was that night that they had a meeting, an all-college meeting, and explained exactly what was going on at Three Mile Island. And I know my roommate was like really, really upset.

INT: Did you attend the meeting?

NAR: Oh, yes. I think I went to all of them up until like the last one or two.

INT: And what was it about your roommate?

NAR: My roommate was really nervous about the whole thing. So, I was pretty much calming her down the whole time. I didn't really... when I get into a situation like that, where I have to calm somebody else down, I usually don't start worrying about the thing until it's all over.

INT: Did you worry about it after it was over?

NAR: I didn't worry about it. But I was definitely affected by it. The first few days that we had classes after the radiation vacation, I couldn't do anything. I had a paper due that Monday. And I never turned it in until that Thursday, because I just could not concentrate. I got kind of worried about that, I was afraid that Oh, no I won't be able to go back to being a student again.

INT: Why was it you couldn't concentrate if it didn't bother you?

NAR: I don't know. I think... I don't really believe that the whole incident really bothered me. I don't know that I was scared. But that's pretty much the way I react in such a situation when other people are worried and nervous, and somebody has to take the initiative to do things. I will generally do it – being the oldest of six kids. It's just always fallen on me. So, when I'm in that kind of situation I usually just go and go and go, until I'm totally worn out. Then when exhaustion hits, I'll go to sleep and wake up the next morning. And that's what I did that whole week. And then when the whole week was over, and everybody else had calmed down and felt it was normal, that's when

I... it was just kind of, I guess just the emotion of the whole week just piling up on me. But I don't know if I was really worried. I thought about it, but I'm not sure.

INT: Would your reaction have been any different had you lived alone?

NAR: Hmm. That's a good question. I don't know. Maybe. It could have been.

INT: In what way would it maybe have been different?

NAR: I wouldn't have had to calm her down. I wouldn't have had anybody else there. But, I don't know. Maybe just the fact that I couldn't see anything being wrong at first. I didn't really think it was anything to be afraid of.

INT: Do you think the college meetings were a factor, or did they play any part in your being calm?

NAR: Oh, definitely. Because not only did I go to the meetings, but a friend of mine, whose working in the physics department and she was telling me all the things they were doing. They needed help and couldn't seem to get people down there, so I said I'll help out. And she said oh great, so I went over there. I was there quite a bit that week. Just doing piddally stuff. I saw the information that they were getting and it didn't really show any kind of danger. There was no radiation above the background or that type of thing. The Geiger counters weren't coming up with anything. Soil samples weren't showing anything. Professor Lutzelschwab's Geiger counter that was sitting on his kitchen sink wasn't showing much, and he was only a mile away. So, I didn't really worry too much about it. So that did definitely calm me.

INT: Were you still listening to the media at this point? Where were you getting your information? Could you give me a rundown on sources?

NAR: Radio. I'm not really sure what station it was. I was maybe a York station, I don't really remember. I would go over to the library and read the newspapers, various newspapers and see what they had to on it. I would read the Carlisle paper, the Sentinel, and sometimes the New York Times. And then I was listening to what was going on in the college news and what the physics department had to say. But other than that, I didn't watch TV or anything like that.

INT: Was it unusual for you to pay so much attention to the news reports?

NAR: Oh, yes. I used to have a radio on a lot. But I never went over to the library and read the papers. I rarely had the time. But I made time for it.

INT: How did you feel the media was handling the incident?

NAR: I thought the Carlisle papers, and the local papers, like the Harrisburg Patriot. I did read that occasionally too. The Patriot and the Sentinel were doing a really good job.

They weren't sensationalizing it or anything like that. It seemed to be the facts, or the facts as they knew them. Nothing really more than that. They weren't editorializing on it or doing anything more than interviewing people. I thought they did a good job. Outside of that when I would read the New York Times, it got to the point where I'd start to laugh at them because it was so blown out of proportion. I believe it was Newsweek or Time too had something in it and I thought "Boy this is crazy". This is not what we're experiencing here at all.

INT: Can you give me an example? Do you remember anything?

NAR: It was just the way they had things worded. It just seemed like things that were going on here were a lot worse than what was actually occurring. Here we were getting the actual facts about how much radiation was leaking and how much radiation was in the area. Like in the Carlisle area. There was nil. And yet from the New York Times and that type of thing and even Walter Cronkite I think I saw one night, or I heard part of what he had said, and then people were talking about what he had said. And it was just "My", it seems like what's going on here the whole place is going to be destroyed the way everybody was talking. It was not what we were finding out here.

INT: Why do you think they were handling it like that, so differently from local media?

NAR: The local media is closer. They were getting the facts first hand. Whereas possibly, some of the newspapers like the New York. I don't know that there'd be too many reporters at the very beginning here in Carlisle. It's not the place where people are going to be in Harrisburg. So probably, one of the reasons is they were getting their information second and third hand. So, if you take any kind of a story and pass it along, it gets changed and exaggerated. And also the papers in New York and Philadelphia and that kind of thing, they weren't really, they didn't have to keep the people of the area calm. They could sensationalize the way things often are sensationalized in newspapers. Here, in this area, this is where the people were living and they were the ones that would have been affected most if anything had occurred. So therefore, the newspapers had to be careful so they did not make the reports worse than what they actually were. Because people were worried as it was.

INT: How did you feel about the way government officials handled the incident? Now you can make a distinction if you like between the local, state and national or NRC.

NAR: I don't really think that I can honestly answer this question, because I don't really remember a whole lot of different people and how they were handling it. I think that when they finally sent in the, when the NRC finally got to work, (I guess it was the NRC) and Harold Denton – that kind of thing. When he went in there. For some reason he seemed to be reassuring. He made things, he seemed to be pretty honest. But I really didn't follow exactly what was going on in the sense of who they were sending in. At that point, I was just thinking; oh, well, the NRC is in there. Hopefully that the nuclear regulatory commission will know what's going on with nuclear things. I didn't really get into the details of who it was.

INT: How did you feel about the way Metropolitan Edison was handling the situation?

NAR: I think at first, when the spokesman came out saying. He was saying things like “Oh there’s nothing to worry about” and blah blah, blah. I think that kind of made a lot of people think; Oh, boy there’s something to worry about if they’re going to get out and say there’s nothing to worry about. Possibly, they were a little hasty in getting out and saying there’s nothing wrong. Knowing that they would probably have to contradict themselves later on. I guess it was a kind of incident that may have happened before and they figured oh well we can probably cover this one up and nobody would ever know.

INT: You wouldn’t be surprised if there had been another incident at Three Mile Island similar to this?

NAR: Not necessarily Three Mile Island no. I kind of suspect that there may have been a nuclear leak or radiation leak of this type if not at Three Mile Island, at one the reactor sites somewhere in the world. Because they just did not report it the way they should have. It was never brought into the news. So I think it may have happened before.

INT: Was there anyone in particular that you trusted during the incident?

NAR: Yes. I particularly trusted the people at Dickinson. Like the science department basically, because they were seemed to be the only ones who were doing any sort of research, any kind of soil sampling or testing of the air in the immediate area.

INT: Was there any particular person in the science department that you trusted? Or any particular department?

NAR: I don’t really think so. Other than when we were at those meetings and Priscilla Laws got up and started to talk. She knew what she was talking about, knowing that she had done research in that field, radiation. I guess she was kind of reassuring because she wasn’t worried, or didn’t appear to be.

INT: Was there anyone in particular that you distrusted?

NAR: I don’t think so. No.

INT: Did you talk about it with your family at all?

NAR: Yeah. I talked to my Mom and she was saying; “Well, why don’t you just come home.” And I said no. And she said why not? Because first all if I come home I have to go through Harrisburg to get home, so I’m just exposing myself more to radiation, if it exists. I’d be closer anyway. I decided not to go home for that reason, for the reason that I’d have to go through Harrisburg. That made Mom and Dad feel better. I guess I basically stayed because just didn’t feel like going home. I felt that there was no real danger and it could be interesting at Dickinson. There were little seminars that were

interesting and I was learning a little bit of what was going on with nuclear energy. What type of machinery they had to regulate it. So I was enjoying myself.

INT: Were they really adamant that you leave?

NAR: No. It was basically if you feel you should stay, fine. But when classes were cancelled, my mother was a little bit, she tried a little harder. She said you know you have a whole week off so why don't you come home, you could just have a little vacation, and that kind of thing. Because I had just gotten back from Germany, so I'd had only been home like four days before I came back here. So they just kind of wanted to see me after having been away for 5 months.

INT: Did you talk about it with any of your brothers or sisters?

NAR: No. I talked to my dad. My dad is like a frustrated physicist and he was kind of following it. He sort of knew what was going on. So he would ask me not, was there radiation in Carlisle or anything like that, it was always, "Now what's this meltdown stuff? I was listening on the radio and it sounds like it's this. I'm watching the TV and they had all these diagrams in there." He said "Do you know anymore about it than I do?" More about a certain reactor and then I'd tell him what I knew and he'd tell me what he knew. It was kind of interesting. It was neat. But we didn't really talk about whether I'd come home because there was radiation.

INT: Did you talk about it with your friends at all?

NAR: Oh, yeah, you had to. It was the only thing most people were talking about, whether we should leave and that kind of thing. I guess that was pretty much all we talked about though, was leaving, or packing, and how many people had left and who was leaving. So we talked in that way.

INT: Did a lot of people leave?

NAR: It think of the 1700 people that go to the college, about 200 were left. I think that was about what it was. They had in the physics building a wheel on the door, a paper wheel that they had cut out. And it said: Percentage of Students Left on Campus. It had a little arrow that they could move. And it said 100% and then it went down to 80, 70 60, 50, all the way down. And then there was a little area that said only physics majors and those working in physics department. And we were waiting for it to get to that point, but it didn't quite make it.

INT: Did you feel that the people in charge were in control of the situation at Three Mile Island?

NAR: No, I don't think so. I think I felt that if they were in control, they would have been able to stop the leaking and cool the reactor. So I didn't feel that they had anything under control.

INT: Do you think they are under control now?

NAR: At this point in time? To a certain degree, I think they're in control in the sense that they know what's going on right now with the reactor. They have systems under normal, pretty much normal procedures, normal operations. So I guess they are pretty much in control now.

INT: Did you make any plans different from what you normally would have made? You listed some ways in which your daily routine was changed. Do you want to elaborate on that and talk about possibly contingency plans that you had?

NAR: Well, as I said, I was working pretty much in the physics department and I was doing interviewing for Three Mile Island. And in the Anthro, American Studies and Religion departments. What else was I doing? We were keeping a count of how many people were still left on the hall. And what else were we doing?

INT: What was the count?

NAR: It was awful. It was to the point where... let's see...two...three... I think there were four people left on our hall, and we normally had something like 17. That was pretty much it I guess.

INT: Did you have any feeling as to why the people left? Why did they leave out of fear, did they leave because parents called, did they leave because school was cancelled and they went to have a vacation?

NAR: I think it was a combination of all of them. Some people were really frightened, and they went home. My next door neighbor, her brother-in-law came up and got her and took her home. She didn't really want to go, but they came and took her. She had no choice in the matter. A lot of people, I think, left because of parental pressure. Which got to be really strong sometimes. Some others left because it was a chance to go to Florida for a week. People went home basically because it was a chance to have another little vacation.

INT: Did you think about leaving? I know you said you didn't leave, but did you think about it?

NAR: I thought about it in that my Mom and Dad had said do you want to go home? And I said no. I also thought about it another time and I can't remember when it was. It may have been like Friday or Saturday. It was after people were just going home by the droves. I remember I was in the library, I went there for some reason, and I was looking for something. And somebody that I knew, a friend of mine came down and found me and she said: "Steve's decided that if anything occurs, he's going to leave and he wants to know; he has room in the car for another person, and he wants to know if you will go

too.” And she wanted me to go home and pack a bag so I’d be all ready in 5 minutes notice, if anything occurred and we had to go.

INT: Did you pack?

NAR: No, (laugh) I didn’t bother. I figured, okay.

INT: Did you think about what you would take if you did pack?

NAR: Not really. I guess I would have thrown a few clothes in a suitcase, and that was about it.

INT: Was there anyone in your life that you were watching in order to decide what you should do?

NAR: Probably the people in the physics department. If they headed out toward a door, I probably would have gone too.

INT: Zoom, zoom!

NAR: Zoom, zoom! My teddy bear under my arm.

INT: Do you have a teddy bear?

NAR: Yes, but he was home. (laugh)

INT: Did you have any mental pictures of what was happening at TMI or what might happen?

NAR: No. I think the only thing I probably pictured was the picture that Neil Wolf drew on the blackboard at one of the meetings of this little reactor and how it was working, and that kind of stuff. Probably just at times pictured the people running around, just a little bit of confusion. Maybe a lot of confusion. That was about it.

INT: Did you daydream at all?

NAR: I don’t think I had the time. I was running around a lot.

INT: Did you have any night dreams?

NAR: No. I never remember them even if I do.

INT: Was your sleep routine changed at all?

NAR: No. My roommate’s was. She was so scared she was afraid to go to bed. She didn’t know whether to leave the windows open, because she was afraid if she left the

windows open the radiation would get in. Yet, if she closed the window, then she was afraid she'd miss the evacuation if one occurred because she wouldn't be able to hear the sirens coming through the window. We had to convince her that they'd run all the sirens in town at the same time and ring all the church bells and then was she able to close the windows and go to bed.

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

NAR: No, I don't think so. There was not enough radiation in Carlisle I don't think to really harm anyone.

INT: Do you think your health may have been affected for the future?

NAR: No, I don't think so.

INT: If you had been closer to Three Mile Island, would you have worried then?

NAR: Probably. Because here at Dickinson we had the faculty who have worked with radiation and they knew or they understood the information that being given out. The people in town and the people closer to Three Mile Island didn't have those people to reassure them. I think that in that situation, I probably would have worried more.

INT: Were you ever afraid to drink the milk or eat the food?

NAR: No. I ate it anyway.

INT: Did you think about it as you did so?

NAR: I remember somebody saying something about there might be an excess of radiated or radioactive iodine in the milk. I figured maybe the dairies would continue to sell it, but I didn't think Dickinson would give it to us if it was radiated.

INT: You had faith in food service?

NAR: To a certain degree. I did drink more... very little milk during that time though. I guess I did sort of cut down. I still ate the food though.

INT: If the worst had occurred, what do you think might have happened? What's the worst that would have occurred?

NAR: The worst that I could see happening was that the hydrogen bubble in the reactor would grow to such a size that the core would be exposed, and I guess that would have been a total meltdown. So, which would have involved the whole thing melting down. As I understand it, and going through the floor of the thing and through the island and into the water. Then it would start fizzing away, bubble, bubble, bubble. I could just see Three Mile Island with these cooling towers and the big plant sitting there in the middle

of it and all of the waters around it bubbling away, because the hot core had hit the water under the island, so all the water was bubbling around the island, boiling away. It could have been interesting.

INT: How do you think you might have been affected?

NAR: I probably would have gotten a really heavy dose of radiation and probably ended up with cancer of some sort in the future.

INT: How do you think the community around you would have been affected?

NAR: It would have depended on how much radiation got into the area. If Carlisle was really hit with a heavy dose, it could have meant this area being evacuated and well, and then maybe Dickinson wouldn't exist for a while.

INT: Why is that? Would it mean an explosion or something like that?

NAR: No I don't think an explosion would have hit but it might have turned this from a Three Mile Island out for maybe 25 or 50 miles into a ghost town.

INT: How do you think life in the area would have been affected then?

NAR: Well, there probably wouldn't have been any people. But, I think any animals in the areas if they stayed in the area, would have been affected – maybe, maybe genetic mutations or something.

INT: What about plants?

NAR: I don't know, I don't really know what the effects of radiation on plant life is. Maybe it would kill it, maybe it would turn into I don't know, maybe a giant tree that ate Carlisle, or something. Who knows?

INT: Did you think about it all of the time?

NAR: Not really. Not until I started thinking of meltdowns and things like that. I wasn't really sure. I guess I was trying to hide something like that from myself.

INT: Did you think of your own death at all?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you think of anybody else's death?

NAR: No, I don't think so. Other than maybe the possibility that people at the plant if there was a meltdown, if there were people on the Island. They could have been killed. But no, I don't think so.

INT: Do you think you would survive?

NAR: Yeah. I think I believed that there was not really the strong possibility of a total meltdown. And that somehow Divine Providence or something would intervene and the core would miraculously be covered by enough water to keep it from melting down and therefore nobody would really be killed. So, I guess we would have survived.

INT: By Divine Providence, do you mean God?

NAR: Yeah, I guess.

INT: How do you feel God figured into the whole thing?

NAR: I don't know. I don't know that I really thought a whole lot about God during the period. I have this habit of not really praying, but just sort of talking to God. I don't sit down and formally pray. I sometimes say, you know, Hey, Boss; what's going on here? I probably said that. I do remember walking down the street and it was raining during this thing and I guess I was headed toward the Union from my dorm, and it was pouring and I was saying: Hey Boss; why do we deserve this one too? We've got Three Mile Island and now you are hitting us with all this rain. What's the story? Other than that I don't really think I connected Him with the whole thing.

INT: Did the rain stop?

NAR: Eventually as it always does in Carlisle. But I don't really think I thought of why are you doing this or anything like that.

INT: So you didn't think of Him disciplining mankind or anything like that?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you think of any Biblical passages or connections?

NAR: No, other than maybe the flood! No, I didn't at all.

INT: Did you think of the flood?

NAR: I just think of that sometimes when Carlisle gets hit by week long rainstorms. I think, oh boy, here it comes, Noah's Ark, time to start building it.

INT: Have you ever gotten (unintelligible)?

NAR: No, not yet. Maybe if I had to stay here another four years I might, but not at this point.

INT: Did you attend a religious service during the incident?

NAR: A religious service...I don't think so, but I'm not sure. I may have gone to Catholic mass. But I don't think I did. No.

INT: Does your own faith have anything to say about the rightness or wrongness of man's desire to use and control atomic power?

NAR: Well, it's been about 8 years since I've been to Catholic school, so I don't really know how would have revised something like the doctrine to have atomic power fit into it. Maybe they would say something like; this is something that God has given us. Given us the knowledge to or the mental capacity to harness something like nuclear power. And from there it's man's problem. I don't really know. Maybe that's my own ideas interjected into it. I don't really know what the Catholic Church would say about it.

INT: Do you think that religious persons or institutions should take any public stand, for or against, human development or use of atomic power?

NAR: No. I think it's a decision that every person has to make for himself and I don't think that religious institutions need to get involved. If individually a priest or a nun or a pastor or minister wishes to get into it, then fine. Rabbi so and so decides to get up and speak against it, fine, but I don't think as an institution it should. No.

INT: So rabbi so and so wouldn't be representing all the Jews?

NAR: No, representing Rabbi so and so and no one else, maybe his family. But that's about it.

INT: Did you feel that you had certain responsibilities during the incident? For example, did Dickinson College community do quite a bit with the Physics department?

NAR: Making the T-shirt. No, I really don't think I felt that I had any kind of obligations toward them. Other than keeping my roommate slightly calm. She used to go and cry with her friends She was so nervous! But, no, other than just trying to remain calm as I would do if I were home. In a situation like that. No, I don't think so.

INT: Did your roommate stay during the whole thing?

NAR: Yeah. She only lives, I don't know whether it's work or what, but wherever she lives she is closer to Three Mile Island at home than she is here. She was worried about her family too. I believe her mother and her brother, or her mother and her sister left. And then she felt a little better then

INT: Did you have any ideas about how it was best to behave in these situations?

NAR: Nothing more than remaining calm.

INT: Was it difficult for you to do this?

NAR: No. I don't know why, but it probably would have been harder for me to play act. It may sound crazy, but... I'm just so conditioned after care of a bunch of little brothers and sisters.

INT: At the time, did this incident bring to mind any past experiences or past events? Anything, it could be personal or in history.

NAR: No. I don't think I did.

INT: Did you see this incident as similar to anything else in your life?

NAR: No. Looking back on it, I can probably say that the time when my little sister was, yeah I guess that would work. Somebody threw a brick at my little sister. She had a hood on, a sweatshirt hood on. She was bleeding all over the place. It was one of those things where I was real calm during the whole thing and after they got her off to the hospital and I was there by myself, then I started shaking and being really...letting the emotion out. But other than that...

INT: Did you think about it at the time?

NAR: Not at the time, just now looking back on it all. There was a potential danger there.

INT: Could you compare this in any way to a natural disaster like a hurricane or a flood?

NAR: Well, I've never experienced either one, so I really couldn't say.

INT: Do you have any opinion as to whether it would be more or less frightening?

NAR: Maybe. I think to me, something like a hurricane or a flood or something like that might be more frightening because I could see it coming at me. Although, this whole incident could have been really frightening to me if I allowed it to be, because I didn't know when I should be afraid. Whereas, you know the unknown factor. So you didn't know when you should be afraid and when didn't have to be afraid. I really don't know though. I couldn't say. I haven't experienced all of that.

INT: How about a war?

NAR: A war? Well, Three Mile Island had the potential to do danger to a lot of people and cancer and that kind of thing. A war is more immediate in that people aren't just slaughtered by the thousands, hundreds of thousands. You see gory things. You see blood, you see people dying. So I think a war would be worse.

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

NAR: Everybody was talking about China Syndrome, but I hadn't seen it.

INT: Have you seen it since?

NAR: Yeah. I thought it was great! When I saw that and saw the people in the control room. I could just figure, oh wow, that must have been what was going on there. And I thought that they were a bunch of idiots.

INT: Is this in the movie?

NAR: This was in the movie. In the movie I could see what a bunch of idiots they were. And people would do anything to hold down panic, and public opinion can shut a place down and God forbid they should do that because then they would lose money, which could have been the story with Three Mile Island. But I didn't think of any of that stuff then.

INT: You mentioned at the time that you had thought of panic over at Three Mile Island and people running around. Were you comparing that to any type of movie or something? Or was that just a broad image that you had?

NAR: I think it was more of a broad image. Just what could be occurring over there. Obviously they weren't sure. So if you're not unsure, you're slightly confused in your head and you're probably running around.

INT: Did you think of any books or stories?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you find yourself singing any songs or thinking of songs?

NAR: I didn't, until my roommate came up with a few. She heard Dust in the Wind and nearly had heart failure. She said "Oh, my God the radiation could be in the air and dust and we'll never know". Then we were sitting in the cafeteria one night and if there was an actual song. When she would hear (unintelligible) on the radio she would really go nuts.

INT: Was it a song about radiation?

NAR: Oh, no. It's kind of interesting though because they're talking about only a moment and the moment is gone and close your eyes and the moment is gone and that kind of thing. It's talking about time how quickly time goes by. So when she would listen to it, it would really freak her out. Time goes by like dust does in the wind.

INT: You mentioned that there were a couple of songs. Can you think of any others?

NAR: Yeah, we were in the cafeteria one night and somebody had a guitar. And the guy picked up the guitar and started playing. Just playing on... it was making plays on other songs that we knew. I don't know if I remember any of them. He was just making plays on songs that had been popular at one time. Possibly Simon and Garfunkel, but I don't really remember now. He was just clowning around and I can't remember any more.

INT: What was the reaction in the cafeteria to his clowning around?

NAR: Oh, they thought it was funny. They thought it was great. This was like one of the first days when people were treating it a bit of a joke. It was not all that serious yet. It may have been Thursday night even.

INT: So this was before people began leaving.

NAR: Yeah, it was before people were leaving. Before people were leaving by droves, in large herds.

INT: What changes happened to the people around you during the incident? You've talked about that a little bit, is there anything you'd like to elaborate on?

NAR: Oh just that people were friendlier. You would see... one thing I did think of, I'm just thinking of it now, that I thought of during the incident was an article that Blair Woodcock wrote in the newspaper, in the Dickinsonian and it was an article on what would happen if Dickinson College was attacked by a severe case of I don't know what he said it was, psoriasis or something. I don't remember what he called it. I think it was something like that. But everybody was in the cafeteria and they put armed guards outside the cafeteria and everybody would have to stay there for like three days, and the fraternity guys would talk to the non-fraternity people and law students would actually talk to the sorority girls and it went on this whole thing. And I started thinking about it. As a matter of fact I even said to Blair, "Hey, Blair are you psychic or something?"

INT: So he had written this before the...

NAR: Oh yeah, it was like a week or two before the incident occurred and it just seemed so similar because you'd be in the cafeteria that week when people had left and everybody talked. There was no such thing as a fraternity table or a sorority table or a geek table or anything like that. It just didn't exist and everybody was sitting together. Professors would come in and they'd just all sit together. It was exactly what he was saying in this article. And in the end of his article he said "and then they let us out and we all went to the bathroom and then when we came back the sorority girls were sitting with their friends and the fraternity guys were sitting with their friends and the law school students were with other law school students and nobody talked to one another and it was weird because that was really sort of what it was like when everybody started coming back to school and the cafeteria was filled not with the people who had been there, the community that had been there all week, but other people, outsiders, intruders and they kind of just came back and not having experienced that week, it totally changed the

atmosphere, although some people who were there and people that made...I don't know if you could say became friends that week, but the ones that were speaking to one another during that week often continued to speak. They weren't sitting together or anything like that, but they were still communicating.

INT: So you felt there was a lasting change in the people who stayed?

NAR: I don't know if it was permanent, but it continued for the semester anyway. In some people, not all. But not since (unintelligible). I think a lot of people will be more aware of what's going on with nuclear energy.

INT: Is there anything else that is about the way people are behaving?

NAR: Not really. A lot of people were worried and I guess maybe that's why they were clinging to those other people that were there. They just wanted somebody to be with.

INT: Were you affected in a lasting manner?

NAR: I don't think I'll ever forget it. It was kind of a nice experience, not the fact of all the potential danger but it was nice that you had the opportunity to just sit down and talk to the professor, just sitting around eating dinner or get a chance to talk to these people that you would never talk to otherwise. And just to actually experience the community that College can be. The whole saying "the College community" is pretty much a myth, that one will never find and yet it's a myth. It's kind of interesting. It's a myth that everybody believes and yet it's something people would like to see exist and yet it doesn't.

INT: So you felt it actually did exist there for a while?

NAR: Oh, it definitely existed. The myth was.

INT: And then it was dispelled.

NAR: Yeah. The whole atmosphere was totally dispelled when everyone came back.

INT: Did you hear any jokes, Anna Herrmann?

NAR: Oh, Anna Herrmann heard tons of jokes, lots and lots and lots of jokes. I wrote a lot of them down too.

INT: If you got them down and they're there for the collection you don't have to go through them now, but if you can think of any to add.

NAR: They are pretty much written down. Just jokes like flipper baby jokes and they were coming out by the score and then there was one that I heard on the radio about a guy who is caught speeding and the cop said to him you know fellow why were you doing

this? After all you were going 85 miles an hour and the guy said “Well I’m trying to get away from Three Mile Island” and the cop said “But you’re 200 miles away.” It was kind of neat because I thought it really showed the fear that some people had that I could just picture some of these people 200 miles away and they would still speeding away at 85 miles an hour they were that frightened. And then the dead baby jokes being converted into flipper baby jokes. The other ones are pretty much on record. Everybody’s heard them like in class the classes you would hear “don’t worry about him, he’s got radiation on the brain.”

INT: What would the circumstances be that you’d hear something like that?

NAR: The person would make a stupid remark. They would say something dumb and then someone would say “don’t listen to him he’s been radiated. He’s got radiation of the brain.”

INT: What seemed to be the general reaction to the jokes?

NAR: They were funny. People thought they were funny. I guess they gave people an opportunity to laugh.

INT: Why do you think they wanted to laugh?

NAR: They needed some way of expelling tension. It was either laugh or cry type of a situation and people would rather laugh. It’s easier.

INT: Did you hear any other joking from any other crisis?

NAR: No, not really, other than the different things they used to have down at the quad.

INT: For example?

NAR: Gary Gilmore Night and things like that. They would make jokes out of that. But that, I don’t know why, but I found that repulsive.

INT: Who is Gary Gilmore?

NAR: He was a guy who was supposed to be electrocuted or gassed or something. He wanted the death penalty and he was in a state where they didn’t have the death penalty or something. I don’t really remember the circumstances.

INT: Did he get the death penalty?

NAR: Oh yeah, he was eventually killed. Could be a firing squad, I don’t remember. I really don’t. But when he finally died they had Gary Gilmore night. It was kind of sick. From what I hear they had a Guyana night and Jonestown punch and things like that but I wasn’t here, so I don’t know.

INT: Where were you?

NAR: I was in Germany. Yep, I missed it.

INT: Did I ask you if it disturbed your sleep at all? Or did it change your routine?

NAR: I don't remember whether you asked, but no, it didn't. It didn't disturb my sleep at all.

INT: Did you dream about it?

NAR: No.

INT: Have you developed an opinion of nuclear energy?

NAR: I still think we probably need it. Solar energy can be a little too expensive, maybe if we put the money into it to develop it to the extent that we have developed nuclear energy, that could be as profitable, but I somehow don't think so. Maybe if they resorted to something like fusion rather than fission they could do something, I don't know. I really don't know enough about nuclear energy to say anything but I have heard that fusion is a possibility rather than fission.

INT: Was this opinion basically the same before TMI or has it changed?

NAR: I don't know that before TMI I really ever gave a whole lot of thought to actually nuclear energy. I did think of things like the fact that obviously we can't go on forever with oil, coal, and gas. We would have to find some sort of alternative to fossil fuels. And I thought solar energy could be a possibility, but I never... And I thought nuclear energy could as well, but I never realized the extent of the radioactive by products involved. So before that, I wouldn't have... I probably would have said "Oh nuclear energy is a good thing" but when this occurred I found out what was involved in nuclear energy.

INT: Have you ever read that article in the National Geographic?

NAR: No.

INT: I recommend it very highly.

NAR: Which one month is this?

INT: It was the issue that came out at the same time at Three Mile Island, so it would probably be April's issue and it's a rundown on nuclear powers. It's not really slanted either way. It just gives you a general background.

NAR: That sounds like a good idea. April, okay I'll look for it.

INT: Is there anything else that you would like to add? That I forgot to ask?

NAR: No, I don't think so.

INT: I didn't skip over anything?

NAR: No, I don't think so. I think we have pretty much covered it.