

Date: July 19, 1979

Occupation: Homemaker.

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

NARRATOR: Was it Wednesday?

INT: Yes, well that's the day when the first release was made.

NAR: Yes, that's when I heard about it.

INT: OK and where did you hear about it?

NAR: I think here in my home, probably on television. I think. I can't be dead certain of that but I think it was that way. Yeah, I think it was right here.

INT: Do you remember how you felt when you first heard about it?

NAR: Well, I did, I was not fearful. I did not panic, if that's what you mean. I thought it was something to be concerned about, but that was all.

INT: Did you try to find out more about it?

NAR: Yes, I did. I listened to the news that night. And then the following day I was catching bits and pieces of it, you know as I went along. But I remember I played golf Thursday, and it was sort of overcast like, you know (unintelligible) crazy. And I'd hear what might be falling on you and then Friday I played it was about the same thing. But I guess, I never had sort of feeling that the networks were trying to convey to everybody, that we were supposed to be scared to death. I just never did have that feeling. I never made any preparations for evacuation. I never got any food. I never had any extra money, any gasoline in the car. It just was, I just, you know. I felt that it was going to be resolved.

INT: (BIG PART MISSING!!!) in anyone?

NAR: Well, I do have confidence in the men that operate those types of stations. I mean, somebody, I mean the particular man I believe, what was his name, the one that came from Washington?

INT: Denton?

NAR: Denton, I thought he came across very well and I was just trying to disregard what the networks were trying to tell me. And listen to my common sense in what I thought maybe was the truth in the thing. Because I think there were a lot of mistruths flying around. And people, some people like to just, I don't know, they. When situations like

that come up they just kind of sort of seem to relish. Not relish, that's not the right word, but dwell on rumors and talking. Sort of stirring, "Oh I heard this did you hear that?" And I don't do that. So I mean I just, what I gathered I tried to, what I read and what I heard, from people that I thought were more knowledgeable than the ones that were saying bits of nothing so, I mean there I was. I finished golf one day and this doctor from Holy Spirit told me some figure of what the radiation level was over there that would indicate that we were all going to be dead by twelve o'clock that night and I looked at him and I thought, well that just can't be. And then when I came back I heard on the six o'clock, well it wasn't true.

INT: Do you know where he had heard that?

NAR: No.

INT: It was just one of those?

NAR: Except that (unintelligible) people come in the hospital, maybe he was working a long shift. Maybe he hadn't heard anything that was more accurate than anybody else. Maybe this person was still in that, I wish I could remember what his field was because it was something very complicated. I didn't know him; he was a guest of a friend of mine. And it was startling at first when he told me that. See this goes back a while. It's hard to come up with this figure of radiation level and what exactly was going on.

INT: Just that it was very high?

NAR: Yeah, and he seemed, you know, to think that it was far more serious than it was, too.

INT: Did there seem to be a general consensus among your friends about how they felt? Or what types of things they were saying?

NAR: Oh, well that's just it, everybody was saying a little bit of everything and I don't think anybody really knew what they were talking about. So to tell the truth I wasn't paying too much attention to what was going around. I think when I was playing golf, I think; I might have even played by myself those two days. Because, I mean, a lot of people that I knew were making plans to leave and stuff like that. So that's just the way it was, my family, none of us; we were not fearful at all. Not fearful.

INT: How did you feel about the media, how they handled it? You mentioned that?

NAR: Well, I did, and I'll go back through that again because that just really disappointed me. Really it disappointed me. I would hear first the broadcast from five-thirty til six which I figured would be pretty accurate because WHP and WTPA (?) were not very far from where this accident was. Not that anybody knew anything. Maybe they don't have the reputation of the national networks, but they had access probably to as much information as the national news networks did. And so that would be calm and

cool, about half an hour. And then Frank Reynolds would come on and like, you know he'd look like he was going to have a nervous breakdown on the network one night over this whole thing. And I was just horrified because I thought, they're just taking this and they are using this in a way that is not good for our country.

INT: Did you trust the government or Met Ed, one over the other one, or how did you feel about it?

NAR: I trusted that Dr. Denton.

INT: Dr. Denton then?

NAR: Yeah, I did, I trusted Dr. Denton.

INT: Did you trust the Met Ed reports?

NAR: Well, they had a jerk on there for three days who was later fired.

INT: Was he?

NAR: I didn't trust him. Oh yes. I mean he was coming across in a very, oh, bad. I forgot what his name was but he was vice president of it somewhere. And he was, it (snaps fingers). And then from then on most of the reports I got were from, I thought from the regulatory commission. You know, rather than throw them at Met Ed. I still don't know what to think of Met Ed because I, you know I don't have, I am not privy to information that would help me make any decision about how good or bad they were. You know, I would have to sort of off the top of my head I think they bungled it to a degree in the beginning I don't think that things were that uncontrollable (unintelligible) and then they tried to cover that up and then I think they got caught in it all (unintelligible).

INT: So you wished more information had been given out?

NAR: Well, I wish that really from the very beginning, ideally, that we would have known just what happened to begin with and taken it from there. I don't think they handled it very professionally, in my guess what could have been dreadful consequences.

INT: Do you think they were in control of the situation at Three Mile Island?

NAR: Well, see, I don't know how soon the government came in there. So it's hard to know which side had the control. I mean I think altogether, whoever it was; I think they had control, yes. I'm not just sure who you can say it was that had it.

INT: But it wasn't just running completely haywire out there?

NAR: Oh no, no. I wouldn't say that.

INT: Were you worried at all about the situation? You said you didn't panic or run around packing but were you?

NAR: No, I was concerned. But, you know, I just didn't, with my faith and so on and so forth. I don't get too terribly worried about, I mean, about things like that. If I were to have a personal crisis in my family I would be more worried because that is something I must deal with. I can not go down to Three Mile Island and tell them how to shut that thing off. So in the things that I personally can't handle might make me feel frightened if I am not able to do that, than something that I have absolutely to do with. Does that make sense?

INT: Yeah it does. Because if you can't do anything about it then you are saying it shouldn't upset you that much?

NAR: Yeah, what is the point?

INT: There is no point to it?

NAR: Of getting so worked up and so excited that, you know, "I'm going to die. I'm going to die. This thing's going to, that core's going to, going to meltdown and we are all going to be radiated to pieces." I mean I never did feel that. I just never did. And then when the situation had cooled off some by about the following Tuesday or whenever it was (unintelligible). I thought that was going to do that. That it would evolve that way and that every day was (unintelligible).

INT: did it ever pass through your mind that you might die?

NAR: No, no, no it didn't, it didn't.

INT: Did you change any of your plans at all, any of your routines?

NAR: Hum, uhm, (no).

INT: You just went about a normal day's activity? Did you have any mental images in your mind of what might be going on up there?

NAR: Well, do you mean as they were repairing during their...?

INT: Yeah.

NAR: Well, yeah. I imagine it was touchy. But I know this country and I know the minds, the genius of so many people. And I just felt, I just had confidence in that and our technology. And I felt that they were going to repair it. I did, I think I felt that from the outset. Now those days when you were watching all those degrees on the television and all this and all that. We might, you know, get a little tinkling in your mind that they

aren't going to get done in time. But you can't help but think that a little bit because of what they were saying. I guess I don't know that they were trying to alarm us at that point, but I think after it got so bad in the beginning to be square and fair about the whole thing. So, let people make their own judgments about whether they should leave.

INT: So you never really had any fears that your health might have been affected or anything like that?

NAR: No.

INT: Were you ever afraid to drink some of the milk from around Harrisburg?

NAR: No.

INT: Did you think about any of the effects of radiation, radiation that has been leaked on the people down there?

NAR: Well, it's, I thought just, just a little bit about it because what did it matter, you know. If it had already been leaked and we had all been exposed a little bit. You know, that's something that can't be undone. I mean, it's done. So like, what's the French word? What's that fate?

INT: Oh, laissez faire?

NAR: Not laissez faire is it...

INT: I don't know.

NAR: I don't know. I think I know what it means; it's already been done so you can't do anything about it so that's that. But there is a French word that means that.

INT: Oh, que sira sira, that's a song. That's what will be will be.

NAR: No, no, I'm not sure how to pronounce it but its fait accompli.

INT: I've seen it written.

NAR: Yeah, that's what I've been getting at. It's too late if anything has been done.

INT: Did you think about God at all during the incident?

NAR: Oh, I thought about God all the time. I especially thought about God during the incident.

INT: How did, what sort of things did you think about? Did you pray at all?

NAR: I certainly did. I certainly did. Probably more than I would each normal day. I did. And I thought, that was sort of why I guess why I had not a causal feeling, but a feeling of, that we are being watched over and cared for. If this is to be this will be. I didn't think that would be His will and that we would all be destroyed or burned or whatever through a certain radius. I didn't think that, but then of course where there are floods and tornados and all those things those poor people probably didn't think that either. But this was just a little bit different than that I felt. A little bit different. I mean this was more manmade than some tragedies that happen. And I did, I prayed a lot. In just whatever I was doing I did, I...

INT: Did you pray for...?

NAR: See, I've lived in foreign countries where life has been harsher. Where there is death and destruction and pestilence and everything. I have just seen an awful lot. And I just sort of o have this attitude, this memory in my mind about being there and how I felt there and what a culture shock it was to me and how the people suffered and all. But then being back there, this is the USA now and we have checks and balances and we have these plants, I know. Probably there has been an incident in every plant that has been in this country. But God ultimately does control everything in my mind. Because if He is in a man's mind and a man's heart, then He is having His very hands on those knobs over there. So I just hope that there were men like that that were in control.

INT: Did you think that God caused the accident to happen, or was it all manmade?

NAR: Hmmm, well you know that's a little difficult to answer. Evidently they turned all those cooling things off, you know, which was error, men's error. Now I really can't say this is a technical part- life and everything and knowledge and expertise. Ask me that again, that same question and I'll come out with the answer.

INT: I was just wondering if you thought that God caused it to happen. For example, some people thought He did to sort of teach man a lesson. A sort of instruction or discipline.

NAR: Well, I could not disagree. We won't say that He made it happen. Could we say He let it happen, is that what you mean?

INT: Yeah.

NAR: Because then, if there are indeed all these situations in all these plats that are not safe and are not being minded right, maybe that would be a very good thing for Him to do. Because I don't think we could live in this country without nuclear power. I really don't. So if that, I mean its worth as far as I'm concerned, whatever happened over there, its well worth it. W don't know what the genetic defects and stuff could be of people in the radius of the fallout, but there, I think there is an enormous lesson to be learned about this and whatever (unintelligible). I don't know that there was any loss of life, was there?

INT: No.

NAR: A great deal of time and money and the worry and all these kinds of things, but they are just material things.

INT: Did you have any biblical images pass through your mind? Like some people thought of the last judgment for one.

NAR: Well, I think that we are real, already in those times now. I've thought that for a long time. I mean, see I lived in Pakistan. Pakistan, part of 1964 and then I...yes, see I did and I've had that feeling for a long time. I think we are in the last times. Just a long...but I didn't, I never felt that God intends to destroy the world. And if we started to have nuclear accidents that would wipe out however many thousands of people that would be in one area, that just wouldn't quite fit in my mental picture of how that's going to come about.

INT: So that would be something separate? The nuclear thing would be something separate from the last judgment then?

NAR: Yes, yes I think.

INT: Did you go to church during that incident, that Sunday?

NAR: Yes, I did.

INT: Was it mentioned in that sermon at all, or in the prayers?

NAR: Let's see. That's when I can't remember back. See usually it would have been maybe in the ten but in the 7:30 service there is a little homily and its always just on the scripture. It's the scripture; I don't think that it was. The ten o'clock it could have been, but it's always just very brief and it's always just a discussion of the psalm or gospel or whatever. So I don't think Father Bill said anything about it. I don't know, it just doesn't pop up.

INT: O.K. so it wasn't a big part of what was going on then?

NAR: No, no.

INT: Did the attendance change at all during the service? Just like any drastically, were there a lot more people or a lot less people?

NAR: Well, see at the 7:30 maybe we only ever usually have between 50 and 75 anyway. So maybe the average of that would some days be forty-five. I could not honestly answer that question. I don't remember. I would say, I think that I would say that there is no noticeable change.

INT: Yeah, see that's what we are looking for. Just like as though all of a sudden just one person showed up and normally.

NAR: That would be interesting to wonder about, in a crisis like that if people do a little sudden think about what its just all about, about what's ahead and what's behind. Just like I was telling you. I was just reading *What the Cost on Being a Christian is and What the Cost is not* (referring to an article or book by Billy Graham- interviewer's note). And in a case like that, people were not.

INT: Yeah, we've found so far that, I think just about at every church the attendance did not change dramatically. It was pretty much the same. I think one person thought that her church had a greater attendance. I don't remember which one it was, but it was just one that may have gone up.

NAR: Well, I would just have to say that I don't remember any noticeable difference that day.

INT: When you were praying, were you praying for God to stop the incident or more for God to help the people? That type of thing, do you remember that?

NAR: Well, I think it was both, but more to stop the incident. More to, yeah, yeah. Yeah, give them knowledge to overcome whatever problem they have. But I think in my normal prayers I'm always...like you probably, praying for Him to help people anyway. So I think at that point I wanted them to have special help over there. And of course then had anything started, had they gone out of control, then your prayers would have very quickly switched from over there to the people. You know, period, all of us. That, well, I mean unless it...I mean I would continue to pray. But if something happened that was irreversible and it looked like we absolutely did have a catastrophe then I certainly would have to pray.

INT: If we did have a catastrophe, did you have any idea what that would be? What might happen?

NAR: Well, just what I would have seen in films of bombs that were detonated and there was radiation. That type of thing, only I don't have much background in what happens. But I don't imagine it's very pretty, I imagine it would be better in a situation, if it was bad, to be dead than alive. If it was as bad as it actually could have been.

INT: Are you thinking now of historical films of atomic bombs that have been dropped?

NAR: Yeah, uh huh.

INT: Like Hiroshima and things like that?

NAR: Yeah, that's it exactly.



INT: Did you think of any other movies or science fiction? Something along that line?

NAR: Well, I'm not too into science fiction. So I don't think I thought too much about that.

INT: Or any books or stories?

NAR: Let's see. I think I did think about *On the Beach* by Neville Shoot. I thought about that, and I don't know (unintelligible) atomic accidents.

INT: Now *On the Beach*, this is just for my personal information, what was that about? Because a couple of people have mentioned that.

NAR: Well, I just saw this a long time ago when I lived up in Massachusetts around in the early sixties. And somehow or another we are in World War III and there is one submarine that is left. And it is down under, you know, and then it finally surfaces in Australia. And of course there is no one anywhere. It is so eerie. And of course there is radiation there too, so I think, and I guess everybody did at this time what the music in it was terrific. And it was with Gregory Peck was the submarine captain and I think Ava Gardner (unintelligible). But I don't know if I've ever read anything else but that was really good.

INT: Because a couple of people had said it and I had never bothered to ask them what it was.

NAR: Yeah, there is more to it than that but that is what I remember.

INT: Yeah, the general gist of it.

NAR: That was almost twenty years ago. But I'm not really interested in science fiction, I try to keep my life as uncomplicated as possible. I just do. I don't like to get into things that boggle the mind down. I like to keep things straight. Yeah I mean there really is enough of good thoughts and sensible things to think about that I don't have to dwell on filth and that stuff. Some of your best and last (unintelligible) science fiction and things like that. But I just like the meat and potatoes of life. I do.

INT: Did you have any ideas about how it would be best to behave during the whole thing?

NAR: I think it would definitely be best to behave very calmly, and not spread rumors about things you do not know and just go along with your own way like nothing has happened to me whatsoever. That's the way I behaved.

INT: Was it difficult for you to do that?

NAR: No, no, I had a lot of faith. I really felt that if God had intended us to be burned off this planet, that's what we would have been regardless. So I mean, just think. Of course this isn't a good comparison. But what happens at Christ's second coming? I mean everybody can't go and change their ways quickly to get into heaven or go to hell, however you have it. So I don't do well in an excited state. I couldn't operate well that way, I wouldn't make it. I have been in emergencies where I have had to administer to people, I can do fine there but I just didn't see any point in getting hysterical; I just didn't.

INT: Did that, you mentioned before that you had been in other countries and that had come to mind. Was that sort of a training for you and how to re, re, go during a crisis?

NAR: Well, it was that training of the value system that your life was where it was. I mean what we have here and what we faced there and then coming back here and trying to keep your head on straight I kind of go over and over it, that's what I meant.

INT: Where all have you been?

NAR: Well, you mean out of the country?

INT: Yeah.

NAR: I lived in Pakistan at the Army Staff College in Kuata, which was near Afghanistan, high up there on the border of Afghanistan. That was the royal, at one time the royal British Staff College where Montgomery and all those British generals used to come. And where Kipling wrote his books about (unintelligible) and whatever it was. I don't remember. Anyway, it's just like you would imagine, as it is in his books. It is fascinating but there is just so much misery down there, and suffering. It's just awful. It's just awful. Then the Americans go over there, we were allowed to take a good bit of stuff over with us because it was a harsh climate and you weren't able to get too much. And you would get there and they had no way to deliver our stuff but by a camel on a cart. I mean it was incredible; it was one of the funniest sights I ever saw. Here's this American family coming in and they are brining their stuff on a camel cart. But it was, it's just something, Martha, that happened in my life that I got sick over there. I got pneumonia and I had a very hard time. Because it was freezing cold in my house and I had two little children and I really, I really did suffer. Because there wasn't too much soul food at the time. It was so worrisome, Pakistan and the United States weren't getting, didn't have good relations at that time. Because we had aided India in India's war against China and it was just, you know, scary. I was homesick too. We were far away and it was just a terrible culture shock. So, I mean I don't do like I should do because I always try to keep my perspective about how life really is for three fourths of the world's people and it is back here, and how one should face a crisis. You face it because people over there have a crisis twenty-four hours a day for all of their lives, a crisis of trying to stay alive. We also lived in Germany, Frankfurt. Or near Frankfort, actually it was called Hanow. And that was not too long a time (unintelligible).

INT: Did you think of anything else in your life other than the Pakistan? That you may have related somehow to Three Mile Island, or how to behave or?

NAR: Well, all I can think of is probably 46 years of exposure in different situations of life. That's really, it's the sum total of how people do and behave in every situation that they are in. Their total experience and everything. Does that make sense?

INT: Yeah, that's what we are trying to find out. The reference points that people use.

NAR: I would just... (unintelligible). I just behave as (pause). I was confident that we're going to fix that thing. I just could never get the feeling in my heart that thing was not going to be fixed. Now had it gotten in there, and I had seen all these (unintelligible). Then I don't know what I would have done. I think I would have been orderly about it. Whatever decision we would have made. I wouldn't have wanted to go away. I think some people went away on a lark. I really do have the impression that some people just went because it was a good chance to get away from everything, three days (unintelligible) or something like that. I just wanted it to work out alright. And you know there must have been a lot of people praying about that, Martha.

INT: Yeah, I've run across that quite a bit.

NAR: So can't we just think that God did answer our prayers?

INT: Yeah.

NAR: I could think that.

INT: It seems to have. Especially when they look back on the incident. There are some things that they are still sort of fuzzy about?

NAR: Do you mean that what you're interviewing job is about?

INT: Just, I'm think now of what people I have interviewed have said about people at Three Mile Island. That no one is really sure a couple of steps. Like how the bubble went down

NAR: Yeah.

INT: And a couple of people have mentioned that that they think that is one way that God intervened.

NAR: Yes. That could very well be because that was such a delicate thing; it took a genius to bring that down at just the right degree. It really did. Maybe somebody else is (unintelligible) enough. Of course you know the devil is hard at work in this world too, hard at work. Working every day as hard in what's going on, and all the angels are.

INT: So you could have had a little play between the two of them you think?

NAR: Oh certainly. I think there is in almost in this, almost, well there certainly is in most individuals. And in probably (unintelligible) situations and stuff like that. You know, that's the way it's written in the Bible from my understanding. (They say, but it doesn't sit right with me?) But the devil lost that one. Thank goodness (laughter).

INT: I don't know, I was worried for a little bit, I didn't have your faith.

NAR: Well everybody has a certain set of memories and experiences and anything eels that has happened in their life. And there are far worse things that have gotten to me than Three Mile Island (unintelligible). I have gotten through far worse things, that I have had control of to some degree. This I did not. Here I definitely put my faith in God, in a situation like this, and just carried on with my life. (Unintelligible), my husband went to work every day, my children went (unintelligible) schools.

INT: So there wasn't any real turmoil in your house?

NAR: No, there was not.

INT: No conflicts between members?

NAR: None at all.

INT: Did you do any daydreaming about Three Mile Island?

NAR: About the possibilities of what would happen?

INT: About anything. Possibilities, about other people? About anything at all that pertains in some way to Three Mile Island?

NAR: Well, I didn't exactly daydream but I did, I worried about those guys being there so close to danger. I worried about that. Now whether that would be a daydream or not, I don't know.

INT: What worried you most about it?

NAR: Well, I just thought they were so exposed to, I mean that if anything did happen boom they surely were never going to get out of there. I thought how much personal courage that took for those guys to go to work every day, when everything was so uncertain and all these misinterpretations were flying around. I thought they were courageous to do that (unintelligible).

INT: Yeah a lot of people wouldn't have done it. A lot of people would have ran.

NAR: Yeah, it was brave; there is no discussion about that.

INT: Did you have any sleeping dreams at all about it?

NAR: No.

INT: Did it disturb your sleep at all?

NAR: No, hum uhm.

INT: Did you hear any jokes about radiation or Three Mile Island?

NAR: I think just those like, just those t-shirts they have. I think I saw "I survived" I don't even remember very many jokes (unintelligible). They were all bad ones.

INT: They were all bad ones going on at the college.

NAR: I can't say that I, Sandy might have told me one from the college, but I don't remember it. I'm not too good at jokes.

INT: Sandy is your daughter at the college?

NAR: Yes.

INT: Did you ever hear any joking during any other crisis that you've been through?

NAR: What do you mean, like when, my personal crisis or like when Kennedy was assassinated?

INT: O.K., Kennedy Assassinated?

NAR: I didn't hear any joking about that, I never would have heard anything, it was just, it was dreadful. Sick people say things and make things up like that and pass them between them. I wouldn't probably hear anything. I don't think I am the kind of person people would tell that stuff. I mean I just don't have that kind of sense of humor (unintelligible) in any of the assassinations o. There were, I guess some jokes about Nixon's tragedy but I don't remember any.

INT: Did you know that Three Mile Island was there before this incident?

NAR: Oh my, I hate to say I did not. I didn't even know it was there. I'm ashamed I didn't. My husband said that, said that he had pointed it out to me. I mean somewhere maybe in the deepest depths of my mind I had heard about it. But it certainly did not my everyday word. Maybe if before this he would have said to me, before the tragedy, he would have said, something about it I would have remembered. But I, I'll be candid and say I did not know about it.

INT: Do you know about how far it is from you now?

NAR: Well, I guess it is probably about...well, we're not in the radius of twenty-four miles so it would probably be, I guess thirty one, thirty two miles. Is that about right?

INT: Yeah, round about, I think we are a little bit closer. But that's pretty close.

NAR: It certainly seemed in the pictures that I have. I have not been down that highway—it has been pointed out to me but I don't think I have seen it.

INT: Yeah, those big towers are quite impressive.

NAR: I bet, Greg told me I might have seen them from an airplane once, but I don't believe so. I would have remembered it because that would be too unusual thing to forget.

INT: Now you said before that you were for nuclear power, do you want to elaborate on that at all or?

NAR: Well, it's such a technical deal that it's just going to be difficult for me to be articulate about it. I would just say that I do not see how this country can maintain a level of energy, even with what they import, and Mr. Carter talking about cutting down half of what we import. I don't think that we can come up with enough synthetic fuels or enough of any alternative, alternate energy to keep us going without some use of nuclear power. Now there is no reason on earth why it can't be more closely monitored. We have learned a lesson, a good lesson from this. So why not use something that's good?

INT: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

NAR: Well I'd like to say Martha was a very good interviewer. I enjoyed meeting her.