

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
Office of Inspector and Auditor

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Report of Interview

Albert F. Gibson, Chief, Operations Branch (OB), Division of Reactor Safety (DRS), Region II, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, was interviewed concerning his knowledge of the deficiencies in the Reactor Operator Training Program (ROTP) at Grand Gulf Nuclear Station (GGNS) as they relate to the restart of GGNS on September 25, 1983. He also was interviewed with respect to a September 23, 1983, meeting between Mississippi Power and Light (MP&L) and Region II officials wherein MP&L allegedly refused to submit a letter they brought to the meeting for the purpose of providing it to NRC. He provided the following information:

In general, he noted that in his official capacity, he would have been the individual to provide the input at the Regional level with respect to the competence of licensed operators at GGNS. Concerning the September 25, 1983, restart of GGNS, he does not recall being specifically asked about the competence of the licensed operators. However, he was aware that low power testing was going to start on September 25, 1983, and would have spoken up if he believed the operators were not competent to operate the plant. In his assessment of the discrepancies with ROTP, most of the evidence indicated that the problem was mismanagement on the part of MP&L as opposed to incompetence of the licensed operators.

He recalled that the discrepancies in ROTP were first disclosed during an NRC training assessment at GGNS on February 15-17, 1983. It was believed at that time that the discrepancies were a problem related to misplaced or missing documentation.

An operational readiness inspection on August 15-September 1, 1983, at GGNS followed up on the discrepancies noted in the initial training assessment. As a result of the findings in this inspection which indicated the discrepancies were more serious than originally believed, an enforcement panel was convened in Region II on September 20, 1983. The panel discussed the deficiencies in the qualification cards for Reactor Operators (RO) with respect to an appropriate enforcement action. The panel deadlocked on a decision in that regard. The panel also discussed the discrepancies in the sense that they were a Material False Statement (MFS). Because the panel which was comprised of John Michael Puckett, Director, Enforcement and Investigative Coordination Staff, Richard C. Lewis, Director, Division of Reactor Projects, and himself, could not reach a decision with respect to enforcement action, the matter was elevated to James P. O'Reilly, Regional Administrator, for a decision. It was decided on September 20, 1983, that the violation involved was Severity Level III and that the issue concerning an MFS on the part of MP&L would be referred to the Office of Investigations (OI).

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Investigation on September 13, 1984 at Atlanta, Georgia File # 84-35  
by Mark E. Resner, Investigator Date dictated September 25, 1984

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ATTACHMENT 6

With respect to the deficiencies in ROTP at GGNS, he noted that October 4, 1983, was the first date that he came to the realization that the problems were more than just a paper work problem. He recalled that on that date, MP&L met with Region II officials to brief them on MP&L's inquiry into the training deficiencies. Based on the information MP&L provided on October 4, 1983, and additional information in that regard that Region II had developed, he had discussions with [REDACTED] OB, DRS, about suspension and/or revocation of operator licenses at GGNS. It was resolved from the discussions that there was no strong evidence to indicate operator incompetence, and in consideration of the fact that there was fuel in the reactor, it was prudent not to suspend or revoke operator licenses.

He noted that it was not unusual for MP&L to review draft MP&L letters with Region II at meetings. The purpose for reviewing the draft letters is an effort on the licensee's part to be more responsive to NRC. It is not a method of doing business that Region II encourages, however, MP&L routinely practices business with Region II in this manner.