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Book Review of Kenneth F. McCallion, Shoreham and the Rise and Fall of the Nuclear Power Industry

Erratum

The citation for this review is 8 *RISK* 91 (1997) in most commercial databases.

Kenneth F. McCallion, *Shoreham and the Rise and Fall of the Nuclear Power Industry* (Praeger 1995). About the author, acknowledgements, foreword by Irving Like, index, preface, prologue, selected bibliography. LC 94-32930; ISBN 0-275-94299-6 [221 pp. Cloth \$55.00. 88 Post Road West, Westport CT 06881.]

McCallion's Prologue starts the reading off with the taste of a legal thriller that includes organized crime, fraud and deceit. Yet, the book is not simply light entertainment.

It begins with a look at what McCallion calls the "Nuclear Club". The club was to become a living embodiment of the peacetime promises for nuclear power by everyone from the government to Oppenheimer, that it would produce inexpensive, pollution-free electricity and free us from the instabilities of the Middle East. This part of the first chapter is one of the few areas in the book where the author deals with the nuclear power industry as a whole.

Thus, the book is more aptly a chronicle of the rise and fall of the Shoreham nuclear power facility on Long Island. including the residents' fight for justice from electricity rate hikes and their fear for safety than a history of the industry itself. The author, Kenneth F. McCallion, presents the events first hand. In his role as Suffolk County's lead trial counsel in the County's case against the Long Island Lighting Company over the Shoreham project, he carried the responsibility of ascertaining the facts and prosecuting the case.¹

8:30 A.M., October 3, 1988, New York, New York — within the next few hours, I would stand before a jury in a federal courtroom in Brooklyn and deliver an opening statement In a lawsuit that had been three years in the making, a case that would break new legal ground and could result in a damage award measuring in the billions of dollars... there was no denying that this was far and away the biggest case of my career.

Long Island Lighting Company's decision to make Shoreham a "go" is the true beginning for the bulk of the book. McCallion gives a detailed history of building the facility, its financing, safety studies and cover-ups. He proceeds to recount details of a Suffolk County investigation of the Shoreham project, the trial and the appeal. The

¹ At xvii.

book is written with an overtone of negativity towards the nuclear power industry as a whole. The thrust of the case was on the economic recovery for citizens of Suffolk County but, in addition to recovery, it also raised serious questions and concerns encompassing the safety of nuclear power facilities as well. This tone is set early when McCallion makes the statement that "nuclear power plants in this country have become 'unsafe at any price'."²

At the end, the book spends but one more chapter on the nuclear power industry as a whole, in both the U.S. and abroad. The final chapter quickly reviews existing nuclear facilities in the U.S., their costs, efficiency and shut down histories and schedules. McCallion also looks briefly at the undeniable success of the French nuclear power industry and the efforts of U.S. industry to move towards a standardized reactor and facility design.

Shoreham and the Rise and Fall of the Nuclear Power Industry is quite readable with specific, point illustrating stories, along the way. Yet, it mostly concerns the Shoreham facility on Long Island. Those interested in the nuclear industry as a whole will have to look elsewhere.

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² At *xiii*.

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