

**NOREEN GANNON,
DEPOSITION, June 26, 1973
MS 81, vol. 38**

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Q. When did you wake up?

A. I heard him [my husband] leaving at 4:30. I woke up momentarily.

Q. Did you go back to sleep after that?

A. I went back to sleep.

Q. When did you next wake up?

A. I woke up again at 10 minutes till 8.

Q. What happened?

A. I could smell bacon cooking. My daughter was downstairs fixing her breakfast getting ready to go to work.

Q. This would be Judy?

A. Yes.

Q. Go ahead and tell me everything you remember minute-by-minute, if possible.

A. When I woke up there was just a sense of urgency for me to get downstairs. I went down and my two smaller children came down behind me. Ordinarily, they don't do that. They sleep late on Saturdays. Or they'll turn the TV on upstairs and watch it up there until noon sometimes. I went in the kitchen and looked at the clock on the stove and it was ten minutes till eight. Judy was in a hurry to get to work.

Q. What time was she due at work?

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A. Eight o'clock on Saturdays. She asked me where a certain pair of pants was and I couldn't remember. I told her to just get on any one she saw and go to work. Since my husband was gone that morning I told her I would call her around 11 o'clock and if it was still raining we would not go to the market. I would call an order in and have it delivered from home.

- Q. Do I gather she was to quit work at noon'?
- A. Yes, she was. So, she went on to work and my children asked for their breakfast. I went into the kitchen--
- Q. Let me interrupt. Are these the two younger ones or all four?
- A. My two younger ones. The other ones were still upstairs asleep.
- Q. And the younger ones wanted breakfast'?
- A. Yes, They asked for toast and cocoa. I turned the burner on and put a pan of milk on the stove and I looked out my kitchen window from my stove. I could see out real well. I had wide windows in the kitchen. When I looked out I saw the water coming.
- Q. Can you describe it for me?
- A. Yes, it had a lot of debris in it. It looked like parts of houses. I saw some automobiles. From my

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viewpoint all I could see was the creek. There was another house next to me, a large house, and it obstructed my view of the road. I saw Mr. Beddow start up the road in his Bronco. He was on his way to work, I assume, and he stopped suddenly and started to. backing up.

I ran out on my porch to see what was wrong and I knew immediately what had happened. I ran into the house screaming for my children to get out of the bed and out of the house. I grabbed my two smaller children out of the chairs and pushed them into the hallway.

When I called the other girls they started screaming, "Where's Judy?" And I told them she was at work. So, I made my two smaller children go to the top of the stairs and I ran to the telephone and called Judy's number. She answered and I told her to get out of the office and get up on the mountain, something terrible had happened. She said, "What has happened?" and I said, "The dam has broke." I threw the phone down and ran. I grabbed some coats as we ran through the hallway.

- Q. By we, are you talking about you and all four children that were in the house?
- A. Yes. They came down when I called for them to come down and we all went out of the house at the same time.

Q. How far was your house located from Buffalo

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Creek itself?

A. From Buffalo Creek?

Q. Yes.

A. Just across the highway. I would say about a hundred yards -- I'm guessing on that, i'm not sure.

Q. Did your house -- did the front of your house face the highway and face the creek?

A. Yes, it did. Well, let me explain this. we used our dining room for an entrance. Actually, the front of the house was facing the railroad tracks. We call this part of the house facing the highway the front, but actually it wasn't.

Q. After you and your four children got outside the house, what did you do?

A. We ran to the railroad tracks to go under the coal cars.

Q. And did you do that?

A. Yes, some went under the cars, some went over.

Q. What happened then?

A. We got over on the road that leads up to the mines and just as we got there the water took our house.

Q. Did you see that happen?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you stop there on the road and turn around

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to watch?

A. I had to bring Lynn on, she stopped and was screaming about the house and T told her not to look back.

Q. How far were you from the house when you saw being washed away?

A. I'd say about a hundred yards.

Q. How far up the mountain had you gotten?

A Well, we weren't up the mountain. We were just over -- just starting up the hill, up this dirt road.

Q. This road led to a mine?

A. Yes.

Q. What happened next?

A. When I thought they were at a safe distance -- I didn't really know that we were but the water seemed to be coming higher -- we were running, all of us were. Lynn kept turning around trying to go back and I had to urge her on. I told her to take all of the other children up to the mine office and I would try to find Judy because I just knew after I had called her that she was concerned about us and would get in her car and try to come .back and take us to safety.

So, when I got them up there I told her to take them on to the mine office and look after them, not let them out of her sight. I went down the mountainside to find Judy