

NH #782 - June 23, 2026 - Nuclear Hotseat Host Libbe HaLevy Interviewed by Physicist Lynda Williams

Libbe HaLevy : [00:00:00] Nuclear marathon. That's what it feels like to produce Nuclear Hotseat every week as we start on its 16th year. One day at a time is a recovery cliché, but one episode at a time is a full-time job. What does it mean to focus one's time, energy, resources, and intent on putting together a one-hour episode on nuclear issues every week for 782 weeks and counting?

It takes a savvy interviewer posing the important questions to the one who's usually asking those questions. And when she gets me to admit how I actually learned most of the material that I use for this show, and I say, "I got them to talk with me and tried to ask them the questions that I think most people would have," which are sometimes very basic.

But without that basic understanding, we can't build [00:01:00] on top of it. And if I have a criticism of many of the activists or the people who I would like to interview, it's that they get way too technical and way too alphabet soup with the abbreviations for a normal listener to be able to follow. Remember, I'm broadcast over Pacifica's Audio Port network, which means that somebody driving down the road in the car is gonna be hearing me.

I wanna make the information accessible. So I figure if I can wrap my head around it and come up with language to be able to explain it, not having come from a technical background, other people will be able to follow my trail of breadcrumbs, and hopefully gain their own knowledge to be able to understand exactly what's going on.

Well, when . Lynda Williams, who performs as the Physics Chanteuse, interviews Libbe HaLevy, that's me, about the hows, whys, and wherefores that led to and continue to fuel this weekly [00:02:00] hour-long look at the hydra-headed nuclear industry, you learn what it takes to every week face down that awful, deadly, dangerous seat that we all share.

Nuclear Hotseat Theme: Nuclear Hotseat. What are those people thinking? Nuclear Hotseat. What have those boys been drinking? Nuclear Hotseat. The corium is sinking. Our time to act is shrinking, but our activists are linking. Nuclear Hotseat. It's da bomb

Libbe HaLevy : Welcome to Nuclear Hotseat, the weekly international news magazine keeping you up to date on all things nuclear from a different perspective. We're a show for people who know nothing about nuclear who

wanna know something, and people who know something who would like to know [00:03:00] just a little bit more. My name is Libbe HaLevy.

I am the producer and host, as well as a survivor of the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island from just one mile away, so I know what can happen when those nuclear so-called experts get it wrong. This week, the microphone gets flipped, and Lynda Williams, a physicist and activist who performs as the Physics Chanteuse, interviews me on how the heck this whole show happened, the personal background that led me to doing this work, how I keep it going, and future plans for both the show and my award-winning play, Atomic Bill and the Payment Due.

We will also have nuclear news from around the world, Numnutz of the week for outstanding nuclear boneheadedness, and lots of honest and verifiable nuclear information. All of it coming up in just a few moments. Today is Tuesday, June [00:04:00] 23rd, 2026, and here is this week's nuclear news from a different perspective.

Here in the US, the Trump administration announced a plan for providing up to 17.5 billion with a B dollars in low-cost loans to help electric utilities buy expensive components that could be used to build up to 10 large nuclear reactors. Weren't they just touting the small nuclear reactors a while ago?

And how many solar panels could \$17.5 billion provide? Enough for all of us to not need nuclear reactors, that's for sure. Meanwhile, Holtec International, a company that has never run a nuclear reactor, is pushing to restart the Palisades reactor in Michigan, which has been shut down and up on the block since May of 2022.

But worse than that is Duane Arnold, which always sounded to me like a [00:05:00] character from a Roseanne sitcom. That turkey has been up on the block since August of 2020. But now, NextEra Energy, the owners, are trying to get that white elephant back on the line. Actually, they're only in it for the money, but they'll never admit that out loud.

But how reliable are these big old nukes that are even still in operation? In France, a reactor at the Golfech nuclear facility near Toulouse, after temperatures as high as 46 degrees Celsius, which is 114.8 degrees Fahrenheit, making the water in the Garonne River, which is supposed to cool the reactor, too hot to do that job.

So why are we wanting to build more of them? Beats me. And now...

Numnutz of the Week theme: Nuclear Hotseat. Nuclear Hotseat. Nuclear Hotseat. Numnutz of-[00:06:00]

Libbe HaLevy : When is nuclear waste not nuclear waste? When the nuclear industry twists the language so up is down, down is up, and Sweden, a country I used to think of as being sane, falls for the nuclear con job. Sweden's parliament has approved reclassification of uranium mining in order to streamline the permitting process for the extraction and processing of uranium.

They plan to treat it in a similar way to other metals and minerals. You know, the ones that aren't radioactive and don't produce deadly health and life-threatening contamination that cannot be remediated and that remains active for thousands of years? But wait, there's more. Because Sweden has also approved a government-proposed amendment that will open up more coastal sites to potential nuclear power projects.

Mm, mm, mm. [00:07:00] The parliament voted in favor of amendments to Sweden's Nuclear Activities Act, under which uranium mines are no longer to be considered as a nuclear facility. The bill also includes an amendment so that, quote, "Extraction waste from a nuclear activity that concerns the extraction and processing of nuclear materials is not considered a nuclear waste product."

Did you follow that? But don't take my word for it that this is a load of bovine feces and Numnutz. Ask the people of Navajo Nation, which has been dealing with the after effects of uranium mining since 1944. Between 1944 and 1986, nearly 30 million tons of uranium were extracted from Navajo lands for nuclear weapons and energy.

Navajo Nation banned uranium mining in 2005 due to the severe health toll, including lung [00:08:00] cancer and kidney failure caused by its radiation. Despite this ban, adjacent mining and ongoing transport of materials through their lands remains a highly contested issue because it puts the members of Navajo Nation at ongoing risk.

You can also check out the Navajo Birth Cohort Study, which tracks genetic damage and physical problems in the children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren of uranium miners. The Navajo Birth Cohort Study investigates the health impacts of chronic non-occupational exposure to legacy uranium mining waste on Navajo Nation lands.

The study tracks pregnant women and their children to evaluate how environmental metal exposures affect birth outcomes and child development.

And let's just say that the results they have found so far are damning. So Sweden, listen up and [00:09:00] smarten up before it's too late. Because if you keep going on this path of changing nuclear names but not its impact on life and health, you will continue to carry the stigma of having been awarded this week's...

Numnutz of the Week theme: Nuclear Hotseat. Numnutz of the Week.

Libbe HaLevy : Here's this week's featured interview It's been a really exciting time for me and the show. With so much to celebrate, it seemed an appropriate time for me to step out of my rather stretched out comfort zone and place myself on the other side of the microphone. So I asked Lynda Williams if she would interview me.

Lynda is a physicist, investigative journalist, activist, and performance artist who performs as the Physics Chanteuse. She has performed for scientists and general audiences around the world, touring her one-woman show, Atomic Cabaret, most recently in the UK at the [00:10:00] Edinburgh Festival and around Europe.

Currently, she is working on analyzing and writing about the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Department of Energy deregulation, as well as a video as well as a video blog podcast called Nuke Puke. Lynda asked the questions and shared some laughs with me in what I can only consider to be a unique interview.

We spoke on June 23rd, 2026

Lynda Williams: Aloha, Libbe HaLevy, to Nuclear Hotseat. What a thrill it is to reverse the microphone and be the first person to interview you on your own show. I've known you for what? Over a decade, meeting at different conferences and events. I love you and your show so much. It's such an inspiration and source of information for me as an activist, and I'm just thrilled to be able to talk to [00:11:00] you today.

Libbe HaLevy : And I'm thrilled that you're the one doing the reversal on the microphone with me, because I have not only known you, but appreciated and cheered on your activism and your creativity and artistry. So I feel we're pretty well matched. Have at it.

Lynda Williams: You have produced Nuclear Hotseat podcast every week now for 15 years, since 2011.

This week starts your 16th year. Why do you keep doing this?

Libbe HaLevy : Beats me Actually, it is at this point so integrated in my life, I can't imagine my life without it. I find that there is so much nuclear news that is out there that people are not aware of, nor are they aware of how the pieces connect to each other and what it means, and the danger that we put ourselves in on so many different [00:12:00] levels, that I feel compelled to be the one to break silence, to share the information, to try and make it as accessible and understandable as possible so that people are not overwhelmed with the doom and gloom and catastrophe that, of course, it's very easy to slip into, but understand that not only are there ways to work against nuclear, to try and get them to slow down and tune back the insanity, but that anyone can participate in that.

And there already are people around the world fighting back, doing a great job, who would welcome other people to join them. And without proper information we can't do anything. A long time ago, a man I knew who published a gay magazine in New York said to me that he started it right after Stonewall because he realized that without our own means of communication, we are at [00:13:00] the affect of any major news organization and their biases and their censorship, and we can't count on them to give us this true information.

So we need to be able to talk to each other and share the real things to be able to progress. That's why I keep doing it. I'll keep doing it for as long as I physically can and for as long as there's need for it, which I don't think there will ever not be a need for it.

Lynda Williams: That's exactly what I appreciate about the show is because, you know, they say, "Oh, you're just in a vacuum chamber singing to the choir."

Well, guess what? The choir needs to be sung to. And I find as an activist and a journalist, I can come back to your archive and look up a guest you had and get a quote or get information about an issue because you have the top people in the world on your show reporting about what is happening in the world about nuclear [00:14:00] everything, and it's such an amazing resource and I just wanna really thank you for that, and I'm sure many other activists also rely, uh, on this show.

Were you always an anti-nuclear activist or environmental activist? How did you get into this?

Libbe HaLevy : I tried being an environmental activist when I was in my teens. I grew up in Chicago. My grandmother had a place in the Indiana Dunes, and the Indiana Dunes were in danger of being torn down to build steel mills.

And I tried to get involved in that. There was a huge pushback against it, including Senator Douglas from Illinois, and I wrote a letter to the White House very indignant asking John F. Kennedy to not allow this to happen. And months and months and months and months later, some toady wrote me some mealy-mouthed letter, and I looked at this and I went, "It ain't gonna happen."

And it didn't happen. The dunes were torn down. Steel mills were built [00:15:00] and then abandoned, but nature was destroyed. And at that point, I lost heart because I knew nobody else who was doing this work, so I went about my way growing up, going to college, and pursuing a journalism/broadcast career.

Lynda Williams: Well, you were at Three Mile Island as well, and you wrote a book about that.

Tell me about that.

Libbe HaLevy : That was one of those ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, only in a bad way. I wanted to visit a girlfriend of mine who I hadn't been in touch with for many years. When I called her, she had just moved with her new husband to a small town in Pennsylvania, and she invited me to come visit.

It was right outside Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. When she met me at the airport, she said, "You've really come to the right place to cool out and get some time away from Los Angeles. Middletown is really middle town. Nothing important ever happens here." Five days [00:16:00] later, one mile from the home in which they were living and where I was staying, the nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island malfunctioned.

Had what is called a partial meltdown. That's like saying you're partly pregnant. It was a meltdown. Being that close to it, we didn't take it seriously for the first two days because we thought that the media was just embellishing it and doing scare tactics and trying to build sweeps week or whatever it was.

But we weren't really taking it seriously. And on the second day, I actually went out as a freelance writer, walking around interviewing people, taking my impressions, and figure, "Okay, I'll write an article about how the media has

overreacted." And the next day I was alone in the house, and I heard a loudspeaker go down the middle of the street and it said, "Stay indoors.

Do not go outside unless you have to. Close your doors and windows," and basically hide. [00:17:00] I had no transportation. The phones were not working because they were all overloaded. They just gave this weird noise on it. My friends were both at work. And as far as I knew, that thing could explode, and I was only one mile away.

I mean, literally you could walk out front of the house, go to, like, the top of a little bit of a rise that was there, a little bit of a hill, and look down, and right down the Susquehanna River there was Three Mile Island. You could see the cooling towers That was an ultimate freak-out for me. I can't begin to tell you how much post-traumatic stress was created by it.

My friends ultimately got through to me. We did evacuate. We stayed about 150 miles away, and about a week later, the airport opened up again. I came back to Los Angeles, but I was a total wreck. I tried to be an activist after that, but I found myself, first of all, dealing with people who didn't understand exactly what it was all about.

They were all just trying to gain some [00:18:00] kind of purchase with the celebrities who were responding to this and going to be doing a concert. The turning point, the real over the top point for me, was when I went to a rally and concert and marketplace put together by the Alliance for Survival here in Los Angeles, and there was somebody who was selling candles at a booth that were shaped like the cooling towers of Three Mile Island, so you could have your own personal meltdown.

And at that point I went, "I don't belong here." I shut the door on nuclear. I ignored it. I paid no attention, and I walked away from the whole thing, and got on with my life, not realizing what a big lump this was inside me.

Lynda Williams: Wow, this is your origin story, like any other superhero. What were you doing at the time?

You, you're, you're a theater gal. So you were doing journalism, but you were also writing plays, doing musical theater. Like, what was the goal there? To be on Broadway? [00:19:00]

Libbe HaLevy : The ultimate goal was to write something that would be a hit on Broadway and give me royalties for the rest of my life so I wouldn't have to worry about making a living, and I could do whatever I wanted.

Lynda Williams: Yeah.

Libbe HaLevy : I did know Marshall Barer, the man who wrote the lyrics and co-wrote the book for Once Upon a Mattress. That was his one-hit show, and he lived off it for the next 50 years. So such things were possible then, and that was my goal. I had been in theater since high school. I wrote plays. I've won awards.

My play, Shattered Secrets, about incest survivors ran two and a half years in Los Angeles, has been translated into other languages and performed around the world, and many other projects as well, from 10-minute plays to two-hour musicals, with more than 50 productions around the world.

Lynda Williams: So '79 is Three Mile Island.

You go back to theater and doing what you're [00:20:00] doing. What changed? How did you get into nuclear? Was it Chernobyl? What was it that exploded in your life that made you, um, realize that you needed to get into anti-nuclear activism?

Libbe HaLevy : When Chernobyl happened, I was still dealing with post-traumatic stress from Three Mile Island.

So my logic was, "Oh, people are scared of nuclear now. I already know what it's like to be scared of nuclear. I don't have to go there." And I completely ignored Chernobyl. I didn't watch the news. I would turn off the radio. I didn't read articles about it. I walked away from any conversation about it, and this being Los Angeles, there weren't many conversations about it, and went on with my life.

But when Fukushima happened, things were different. First of all, I had gone through massive healings in my life on a lot of issues, so I wasn't paralyzed or crippled by the information. And as the story rolled out, [00:21:00] it was horrible earthquake, tsunami. Oh my God, how horrific that was. But then I heard about the three nuclear reactors on the coast that had been swamped by the tsunami and that were in the process of melting down, and that brought me right back to Three Mile Island.

Not only the fear, but more than that, the information that I had gleaned at that part. I recognized exactly how bad this was. I think it was on the fourth day that the explosions started happening, and the stories came out that there was a plume of radiation that had been released from these sites, and that because of the rotation of the Earth and the winds, it was projected to hit the west coast of North America in eight days.

By the west coast of North America, they meant kind of from Northern California all the way up through Vancouver, possibly a little bit more. Really terrible. And the next day the news stories came [00:22:00] out and they said, "In seven days this plume will hit." The next day they came out, "In six days this plume will hit."

And the next day the story disappeared. It was nowhere. I Googled, I searched. Every mention of that countdown disappeared. It was like it was scrubbed from the internet, and that doesn't happen without a really big piece of pressure coming down on media to force this kind of obliteration of an ongoing news story.

And I think that was the key that led me to about two and a half months later while on a retreat in Sequoia, I was crying and apologizing to the Earth and praying and journaling and wondering, "Is this the end of everything?" And while I was there, in the midst of all of this processing, it was like I heard a voice in my right ear say, "You will do your first podcast on Tuesday."

Now, a disclaimer. [00:23:00] I'm not clairaudient. I am not schizophrenic. I do not walk around hearing voices. But this was as if someone was just standing there and saying, "You will do your first pod-" A- I tried arguing with it. I tried debating with it. And finally it said, "If you don't do your first podcast this Tuesday, you will always regret it."

And that got to me because I've lived my life to not have regrets, 'cause you regret what you don't do. You don't regret what you do. And I didn't want to have any regrets around this. So when I got back from Sequoia, it was a Monday, I put out one, this was big marketing, one post on Facebook saying, "I'm thinking of doing this thing."

Would anybody like to be on a conference call with me so I can start a podcast about this?" And two people showed up, one of them I didn't even know, the magic of the internet, and recorded this first conference call, and they both said, "Yeah, we'd be interested in doing this." I said, "Okay, well, I'll do this until either there's not a [00:24:00] need or I get tired of it or whatever."

And here it is, the start of the 16th year with 782 episodes up and running, and I'm still going.

Lynda Williams: Incredible. Uh, your energy and devotion is amazing to... And s- very inspiring to me as I'm trying to do my own podcast, so Um, someday. How did the format of the show develop from that first show, and who wrote the great theme song?

Libbe HaLevy : It was an evolution. It was trial and error with a lot of error, because for about the first two and a half months it wasn't really a podcast, it was a conference call. And it was live on Tuesdays at 2:00 PM West Coast time. I would have to contact people beforehand, including the two f- who had originally been on, and say, "I need people on this or else the system is not gonna work.

Would you please call me?" [00:25:00] And I would reach out to people who I saw online who were talking about things, who seemed to know what they were talking about, and I would ask them on the show to be the interviewee. And I can't tell you the number of times people said, "Oh, yeah, I'll be there," and then blew me off completely.

Because who was I? Nobody knew me. I hadn't been around anywhere. But I kept doing it. I went to a meeting that took place in the San Francisco area that was put together by NIRS, and that was where I met a whole room full of activists, let them know about the podcast, talked with a lot of them individually, and started building my network of people.

The format had no kind of introduction, and then I found out that there were sirens that went off around nuclear reactors if there was a problem, and I got a copy of the recording of the siren from San Onofre, and I used that as the start of the show with this very serious voiceover that said, "That is the sound of a nuclear reactor."

That is a sound no one ever [00:26:00] wants to hear. It means that you are in the Nuclear Hotseat. Ba, ba, ba, boom. I mean, it was dire.

Lynda Williams: How did the name of the show come to you?

Libbe HaLevy : Oh, that came to me when I was in Sequoia. I thought, "If I was to do a show, what would it be?" And it's like nuclear had to be there because it's a searchable term, but nuclear what?

Nuclear this, nuclear that. And I went, "What's something that's dangerous that people will understand off the top without any explanation?" And nuclear, when I got hot seat, I went, "Okay, that's the title." So once I had this show, which was developing a format, I then began recording the show so I could edit after the fact, and I wasn't tied into getting all these people live on it.

And I got a lot of complaints from people saying, "Boy, that's a really annoying sound." And it's meant to be because it's a nuclear warning. But I realized it wasn't necessarily the best possible intro. And I've written musicals. I am a lyricist. I am a [00:27:00] librettist in addition to a playwright. I had an idea for a jingle, but no musical ability to bring it forth.

And fortunately, I know some really terrific musicians. I contacted Merrily Weaver, who's the singer on it, wonderful singer, and her husband, John Barnard, who improvised all of the accompaniment on it. John has since passed away just very recently. But they came into studio. I finished writing the lyric while I was there, and I gave it to them, and I gave them prompts as to what I had in my mind, and they turned that into the music, and Merrily sang it, and that was it.

That was the same day we also did the jingle introduction for Numnutz of the Week. And that was all a single recording session of two hours, and that's what I've relied on ever since. People have complained, "It's so lighthearted. How can you do that?" I don't wanna gild the lily with doom and gloom anymore.

It's kind of like we're a community, [00:28:00] we're working to end nukes. This is going to give you information. There will be humor wherever I can possibly find it, and this is just to set you up for wanting to listen as opposed to being afraid to listen.

Lynda Williams: Nuclear Hotseat airs on Pacifica stations. How did that happen?

Libbe HaLevy : The esteemed Harvey Wasserman. Harvey has been affiliated with Pacifica for I don't know how long, uh, certainly decades I would say. We were together at a gathering in Santa Monica, and somebody from Pacifica was there who was the general manager at the time, and Harvey said, "You should be on Pacifica." So he introduced me to this man, and we talked, and he said, "Look, we don't have time on the big Pacifica broadcast stations," you know, like KPCC or WBAI in New York.

He said, "There's no space on that. However, there is a secondary Pacifica network called Audio Port, which is for community radio stations, smaller [00:29:00] stations, and provides a range of programming that they can pick and choose from, and we can put you on that platform." So they did that about nine years ago, and I've got a network of about 20 stations that pick me up on a regular basis, and I'm hopeful that many more will want to as soon as they find out what the show is covering, because nuclear is such a prominent issue in the world today on so many of its different levels.

We'll return with the second half of this week's featured interview in just a moment, but first... Nuclear Hotseat is going through an evolution and expansion, both in honor of the start of the 16th year and because, let's face it, it's time. The world is awash with nuclear issues from local to global, and there's no better time for people to become aware of this show, its archive of more than seven hundred and eighty episodes, and the [00:30:00] ongoing intent.

To that end, the website is being upgraded. We're launching a YouTube channel, and social media campaigns are being mapped out to spread the word every week in order to build the listenership. I've assembled a team of people who are both skilled in their respective online platforms and staunchly against nuclear.

It's a great group that gives me a lot of hope that we'll solve the ongoing tech problems that have plagued me. Big plans, but not without a cost. New website hosting, expert consultants, assistants I can count on every week to handle the tech details that so often trip me up. It's not going to be inexpensive, but it's definitely going to be worth it to build the long-term future of the show, its archive, and a structure that will sustain it for years to come.

That's why I'm reaching out to you. Whether you're a longtime listener or just discovering the [00:31:00] show, Nuclear Hotseat is here for you every week with news, analysis, expert interviews, and more and more varied nuclear information than you'll find anywhere on mainstream media. And you can be assured that we will always come from that important different perspective rather than the one pushed by the relentless multimillion-dollar nuclear industry PR propaganda campaign that is working so hard to brainwash us into thinking nukes are good and necessary when they are neither.

That's why you need Nuclear Hotseat. So help us out with a tax-deductible donation. Any amount will support the work, be it one time or a recurring monthly gift. As little as five dollars can help make an important difference. Or you might want to send us sixteen dollars in honor of the start of our sixteenth year.

Or don't limit yourself. We'll accept more. It will help us out even more. All [00:32:00] goes towards keeping the show alive. We are a 501 non-profit organization, which means that your donations are tax-deductible. Just go to nuclearhotseat.com and click on the red Donate button. If you have Zelle, you can send money directly to info@nuclearhotseat.com. Whatever you can do to help, I'm grateful that you care and that you're along with us as we move into an expansive and hopefully progressively more nuclear-free future.

Now, here is the conclusion of this week's featured interview conducted by Lynda Williams with me.

Lynda Williams: How did you manage to write a play while producing Nuclear Hotseat? So you've written this play, Atomic Bill and the Payment is Due. What's it about, and how did you come to write it?

Libbe HaLevy : As I like to explain, it answers the question, how do you hide a nuclear bomb blast [00:33:00] in plain sight?

It is the Oppenheimer adjacent true story of a New York Times science reporter who was embedded in the Manhattan Project, and how he sold his soul to get the story, as well as the story of the podcaster in current times who became obsessed with taking him down

It is on many levels the story of William L. Laurence, who was that science reporter. He was an absolutely completely respected reporter, journalist for The New York Times until he started getting a little too close to Manhattan Project stories without clearance. This was before the Trinity test, this was before Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Leslie Groves, who was the head of the Manhattan Project, was freaking out because this guy was coming up with stories that were way too close to what they were actually doing, simply because he understood the science and he could put the pieces together. To get control of him, this is my take [00:34:00] on it as to why he was offered as opposed to somebody else, he was brought into Los Alamos and the Manhattan Project to write stories about the building of the bomb and the people around it and all of those things.

None of them could be used yet. They were all put in a safe by General Groves and couldn't be used until after they got clearance. But he wrote all of these stories. He knew this was gonna make his reputation, this was gonna make him money, this was going to be huge. And he was tasked with writing a press

release to cover up the fact that the Trinity blast had happened, 'cause you've got a nuclear bomb going off, you can't quite say, "It's nothing."

So he invented the story of it being a munitions dump explosion at a base in the middle of the desert, and the press release that went out said, "Nobody was harmed. There was some damage to the property. Nobody died. Go on about your [00:35:00] lives," basically. However, I then learned that that wasn't the only press release he wrote.

He wrote four separate press releases before the bomb went off, covering everything from that to there's been poison gas released. They couldn't say radiation. Poison gas released, and we have to evacuate this part of the state of New Mexico, and martial law is instituted. So he had four different ones, and they just picked the one that was most appropriate in the moment, 'cause they didn't know if the bomb was going to ignite the atmosphere and destroy the planet.

Those were the kind of games they were playing. Beyond that, Lawrence was just convinced this was gonna make him all the way. But there kept on being, even after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he didn't get clearance to give them to The New York Times. Groves was sitting on them. And then an Australian reporter writing for a British newspaper had managed to get into Hiroshima ahead of General [00:36:00] MacArthur's clampdown on the site.

He saw what had really happened there. Because MacArthur only wanted them to write about the physical damage to the site and the power of US might having the bomb. This man, Wilfred Burchett, saw the dead and the dying and the skulls in the rubble, and he wrote an article that got published with the headline Atomic Plague, subtitle Doctors Dying Where They Stand.

I write this as a warning to the world. He put it out there, and Groves had to clamp down on it. And Lawrence was enlisted, he was coerced, he was whatever words you want to use, into writing the article for The New York Times that completely discounted and undercut Burchett. And it was only after that that his articles got released.

They got published on the front page of The Times, and he became famous, and they gave him a [00:37:00] Pulitzer for it. But there was an after story to that, because he never got from this what he thought he would get. Now, realize in finding out the pieces I could find about Lawrence, I also learned that he had destroyed his files, his letters, his calendars, all of his research and resource

materials, and left behind his published articles, four books, and two very manipulated oral interviews at Columbia.

Other than that, there was no material on him. So I had to try and piece it together, and this is where I use my background. I have a master's degree in spiritual psychology, so I understand psychologically how pieces fit together and how subliminals come forward. And I had to try and figure out who this man was and how he did it.

I have no idea why, but from the time I found out about the four press releases, I was absolutely obsessed with figuring out how did this take place. I did not set out to write a play. [00:38:00] I set out to solve a puzzle. And after six and a half years of doing this and taking notes and sticking them into a file over and over again- I looked at it and I went, "You know, maybe there's a play in this."

And it took me a couple of years, and the first play read like something that would be a sequel to Fiddler on the Roof, 'cause he came from Eastern Europe, and the pogroms, and all of that. It was not a very good play, but at least I got it out of my system. And then I joined a playwriting workshop led by a wonderful playwright and teacher named Jamie Brandly.

It was six women. Through the course of taking two rounds of this workshop, I had four separate readings of the show, either act one, act two, or both. Through that process and the feedback I got, I was able to shape it into the form that it is in now, and that's what I have been sending out to theaters, activist groups, [00:39:00] to possible producers.

I'm looking for representation, so agents and managers. And using it as the key to the door to open up my future, not just for this play, but for the rest of the work that I have done.

Lynda Williams: What is it that a play can accomplish telling this story that a journalist or a podcast or a documentary can tell? Like, why did you feel motivated?

Because you can do it all, so why do you feel this deserved a play, a theatrical treatment?

Libbe HaLevy : First of all, in terms of expressing myself, theater is my first language. I started writing plays and musicals when I was in high school, and I've continued to be involved in theater for decades since then. I actually co-

founded and ran my own musical theater development workshop called Broadway on Sunset for many years.

Theater is my default, because that's where you can get to emotions. And for [00:40:00] me, it's unresolved emotions that run the world and are behind the worst of the decisions that are out there and the worst of the steps that are taken. So as I was getting this information about this individual, I started trying to construct him as a person, and that led to scenes falling out of my brain.

And I found that I was finding the rationale, the human rationale, flawed though it was, in the decision to drop the bomb. That's what theater provides that documentaries cannot. Because I can go into an imagined backstory based in reality, but not based on any source material. I have a quote from the man who directed the film Bombshell.

It's a documentary. It's been on Frontline. It's won awards, and it deals with media manipulation and includes a big chunk about Lawrence in there, but it's fact-based information. [00:41:00] I interviewed the director, Ben Lederman, for Nuclear Hotseat, and he said, "As documentary filmmakers, we feel we're working with handcuffs.

We can only use a picture or written words that we find, and we have to find them. We don't have the creative license to break this down more psychologically. You did, and that," meaning your play, "is astounding to me, and it's astounding to me that you did it. It was really terrific."

Lynda Williams: Congratulations. And I heard as well that you just won a Special Script award from the 2026 International Uranium Film Festival for the play.

What's that, and what does it mean for you?

Libbe HaLevy : First of all, Atomic Bill and the Payment Due is a play, not a film. It's not even a film script, it's a play script. Now, I have working relations with the co-founders of the International Uranium Film [00:42:00] Festival, Marcia Gomes de Oliveira and Norbert Suchanek. And just as somebody in their circle of friends, I sent them a copy of the script and said, "If you got any thoughts on this or any notes on this, just let me know."

It was not a submission or anything, and I was not expecting them to turn around and recognize it with this award. And Marcia wrote in the jury statement that, "This is a future piece of great importance. This is a story that needs to be

seen." I can think of no higher endorsement. Basically, I was levitating once I heard it.

And I've been getting that information out as well because, you know, everybody likes to be recognized and acknowledged and all the rest, but I've now put in 14 years on this play. To have it be in a place where it's being acknowledged is wonderful and will help it lead to future acknowledgments.

Lynda Williams: Well, congratulations.

Libbe HaLevy : And- Thank you [00:43:00]

Lynda Williams: So what's happened with the play since you finished it? Are you doing rewrites? Are you having readings?

Libbe HaLevy : There will be readings until after the Broadway premiere when that version of the script is published. It's done for now, but there continues to be evolution of it. But I've already been fortunate that the show was selected by the Peace Resource Center of Wilmington College in Ohio as a centerpiece of their 50th anniversary celebration.

We were in a 400-seat theater. Beautiful theater. Huge rear screen projection. And for a staged reading, the actors have their scripts in hand, they sit on chairs that are on risers, and do a little bit of movement, either walking up to a microphone or walking to a blank area. We're not talking about a big production.

The director, who's one of the heads of the theater department there, Tara Liddy, who's just wonderful, added [00:44:00] all kinds of pictures and film clips and copies of articles projected on the rear screen to fill in the picture so that afterwards people said, "Oh my God, I felt like I was in the middle of a movie."

And there were places, at one point the podcaster character, who's based on, oh, I don't know, me, is delivering a speech in front of the United Nations, and there was just this projection, full-screen, wide, 400-seat theater projection screen with the United Nations in the background and the actor standing in front of it, and you'd think she was standing in front of the United Nations.

So the illusion was there even though it was at a very modest level of physical production. That was remarkable. I do have a video of that, which has helped me move the play forward. It was also selected by a group called the Athena

Theater Project for a feedback project they do with dramaturgs called Read and Rant.

So I got the benefit of multiple dramaturgs [00:45:00] giving me feedback and notes on that, which helped shape it further. And right now we're awaiting final word, fingers crossed, that on August 6th, the anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, the South County Peace Group on Long Island will be presenting a staged reading of the play as part of their commemoration.

They are going to be in conjunction with other peace groups from Long Island. And all things being equal, I will be flying out and playing the lead role.

Lynda Williams: Fantastic.

Libbe HaLevy : Again, we're waiting for some approvals to come through. It's very short notice, but Tara Liddy is again on board as the director. We have a couple of the actors who have volunteered to return for it, and it's very exciting because it's close to New York, and I want New York agents, managers, those kind of people, to at least have the opportunity to come out and see the play in this form.

Lynda Williams: Right [00:46:00] on.

Libbe HaLevy : Because I'm looking for representation, be it for the play or be it for me as a playwright. Either way, this deserves to have some muscle behind it because when people left the theater, one woman in particular wrote us a long email and she said, "I will never look at nuclear the same again."

That's my goal with the piece.

Lynda Williams: So what's next for you? Do you have any other plays up your sleeve?

Libbe HaLevy : I have two projects I may be revisiting. First of all, I have a completed script, Shattered Secrets, which has been performed internationally, about seven incest survivors in a 12-step meeting the night that everything goes off the rails.

That has been very successful. I've had people who told me that it helped save their lives. The two projects I can possibly move forward on, one is a musical that was inspired by Three Mile Island called Kazoo. And Kazoo is a musical myth. It's about a dysfunctional family that spends the day in an amusement

park where all the rides are [00:47:00] emotional confrontations, and they cannot leave until they come to terms with the fact that they haven't been communicating with each other.

And if they stay in the park past a particular ceremony, they're gonna be trapped there forever. They're going to become like Disney characters who can sing and dance but can't speak for themselves, and thus will have lost the ability to communicate. So the play is about the need for communication and for love if families, if the world is going to survive I need a composer for that because the composer stepped away from that.

After a number of years, he just left musical theater entirely and wanted nothing to do with it. The other is a Marilyn Monroe play that I have. Two characters, Marilyn Monroe and a feminist therapist who are in purgatory, and neither one can leave until Marilyn claims the rage for how she was manipulated by men during her life, and the therapist, who has many issues, including a major scar on her face, accepts her own [00:48:00] beauty.

So it's on feminism and femininity. That's the meditation. So one of those two will be my next project, but for now, everything is about getting Atomic Bill and The Payment Due into the right hands for the right productions. And if it's a stage reading or a reading, I can do multiples of that in many locations, all of it aiming towards a professional production, preferably on Broadway.

Lynda Williams: Well, I hope to see it on Broadway. I can't wait to go to the premiere someday. And I just have to say, Lebie, it's been a delight and a pleasure and an honor to interview you on Nuclear Hotseat today.

Libbe HaLevy : Thank you for having stepped forward to do this, Lynda. You did a great job, and of course, I'm a big fan of yours.

We're gonna use one of your songs at the end of the show to show people some of what your ability is as the physics chanteuse.

Lynda Williams: You know, there is something I want to say, and I don't know if you want to add it in, but one thing I'm really impressed [00:49:00] about your work is, as a physicist and someone who's u- fact-based most of the time, is your knowledge of physics and how you do stick to the facts.

You don't use hyperbole. I've never heard you jump into conspiracy theories or even have overly emotional, irrational... You know, we're al- activists are always claimed to be irrational because we're pissed off. But you're not a physicist by

training. So, like, the question is, how did you educate yourself about this topic, which is not trivial and is challenging and scary to people?

And h- what is your ethos that you use to maintain your focus on facts and rationality? It, it, it's truly remarkable and inspirational for all laypeople to see what you can accomplish on your own.

Libbe HaLevy : Well, I didn't do it on my own because there are all the people that I've interviewed. The easy way to explain it is [00:50:00] I asked stupid questions until I learned enough to ask smarter questions.

That was cumulative. I've had the benefit of interviewing multiple times Arne Gundersen of Fairewinds Education, Gordon Edwards of Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, scientists and researchers like Joe Mangano of Radiation and Public Health, Mary Olson of Generational Radiation Impact Project, award-winning environmental journalist Carl Grossman, and of course, the mother of us all, Dr.

Helen Caldicott. All these people and so many more, M.V. Ramana, David Lochbaum, I got them to talk with me and tried to ask them the questions that I think most people would have, which are sometimes very basic, but without that basic understanding, we can't build on top of it. And if I have a criticism of many of the activists or the people who I would like [00:51:00] to interview, it's that they get way too technical and way too alphabet soup with the abbreviations for a normal listener to be able to follow.

Remember, I'm broadcast over Pacifica's Audio Port network, which means that somebody driving down the road in the car is gonna be hearing me. I don't want them sitting, taking notes there and trying to look up something on Google, or heaven forbid, on ChatGPT, to be able to figure out what's being said. I wanna make the information accessible.

So I figure if I can wrap my head around it and come up with language to be able to explain it, not having come from a technical background, other people will be able to follow my trail of breadcrumbs and hopefully gain their own knowledge to be able to understand exactly what's going on

Lynda Williams: What is your ethos about remaining even-keeled?

How do you avoid hyperbole and emotionality? But you know, it's true, because you are. Like, you're not some [00:52:00] hysterical show. Like, you're very... 'Cause you're a journalist. It's your journalist ma- It's your journalism, I'm sure.

Libbe HaLevy : It's more than that. I've had a lot of emotional education in my life, both in my own healing process and through Shattered Secrets.

I also worked on the National Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-4-A-CHILD, as a counselor. And with what I've learned about the emotional equation of how things happen, if we're going to get to the facts, I have to take myself out. I ask a question and let the person run with as much of an answer as they have to give, because they're the expert.

I'm just the expert in asking the question that will trigger them. If I find that by accident I have made a mistake, the following week I have a retraction. I will always err on the side of truth, because as far as I'm concerned, I'm creating an archive of certainly 15 years weekly of what's happening in [00:53:00] the nuclear world, but beyond that, for the future, for people to be able to research, as you do, and find out the truth without having to say, "Well, do I believe her or do I not?"

And there are a lot of sources I do not trust. I can spot the bovine feces or the hyperbole or the doom-shouting fearmongers really quickly. So I only use trusted sources. I try and keep myself calm. This is all abetted by the fact that I have significant hearing loss, at least 50% at this point. So I ask a question, let the person talk, and hear the full answer on playback when I can bump the audio level.

Lynda Williams: Libby, it's been a delight and a pleasure and an honor to interview you on Nuclear Hotseat today.

Libbe HaLevy : Thank you for having stepped forward to do this, Lynda. You did a great job, and of course I'm a big fan of yours. We're gonna use one of your songs at the end of the show to show people some of what [00:54:00] your ability is as the physics chanteuse.

And I thank you for joining me this week, though from the other side of the microphone, for Nuclear Hotseat. This has been Nuclear Hotseat for Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026. You can get Nuclear Hotseat delivered via email every week if you go to our website, nuclearhotseat.com. You can't miss the yellow opt-in box.

Fill in your first name and email address and bam, every week we will deliver one email to you with the link to that week's show as soon as it posts, and a brief description of some of its content. That way, you never need miss a single episode ever again. Help us out in another way, because if you have a story lead,

a hot tip, or a suggestion of someone to interview, send that information in an email to info@nuclearhotseat.com.

And remember, if you can go to Nuclear Hotseat and [00:55:00] donate, our 16th year, we will really appreciate it. This episode of Nuclear Hotseat is copyright 2026 Libbe HaLevy and Nuclear Hotseat. All rights reserved, but fair use allowed as long as you cite the program, website, names of any guests whose comments you use, and me.

For now, this is Libbe HaLevy of Nuclear Hotseat reminding you the main principle of journalism, besides being accurate and fair, is to be skeptical, to raise questions, to not take what officials say as the gospel truth unless it's really proven, if there's documents. There you have it, your weekly nuclear wakeup call.

So whatever you do, don't go back to sleep because we are all in the Nuclear Hotseat, and we're going out on a song written and performed by Lynda Williams. It's called Depleted [00:56:00] [00:57:00] [00:58:00] [00:59:00] Uranium.