

Virtual Conference 2021

Good Things *Can* Come From Bad Events

The Story of Craig Kroon Van Diest

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Craig's Story began in 1975 A *Year of Great Promise*



Joint US/Soviet Space Program



Bill Gates and Steve Jobs



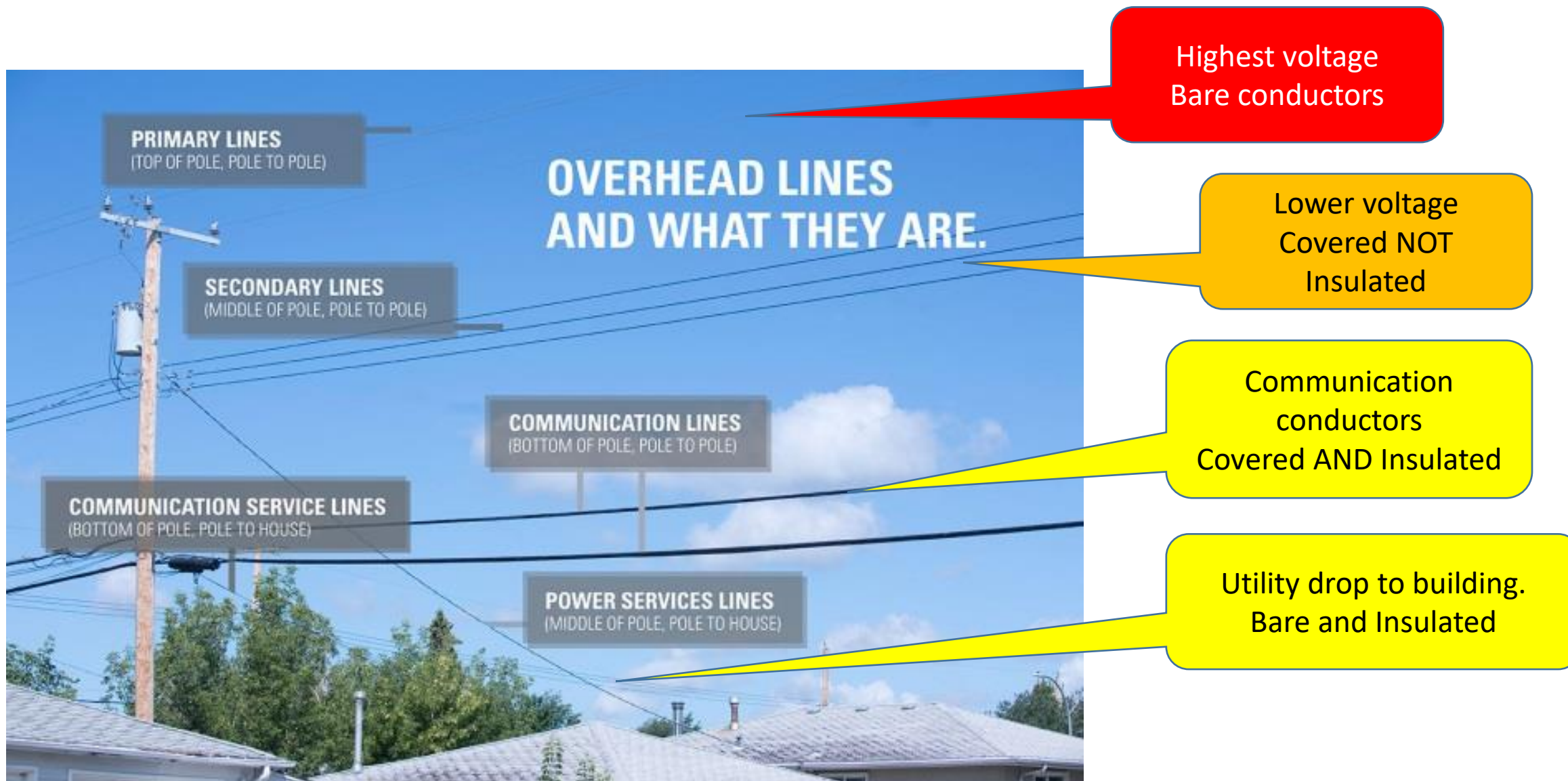
“How did a year of such great promise come to this?”



What Happened? Installing antenna on top of tower.
Got within arcing distance of 115 kV
“It took an eternal second to hit the roof”



Recognizing the hazard – Which of these are safe?



“Why don’t we insulate ALL electrical wires?”

- Electro/mechanical reasons
 - Dissipate heat
- Rapid deterioration due to environment
 - Heat, sunlight, movement
- Insulation cannot be trusted, especially at higher voltages
 - Space wires appropriately (isolation) to achieve insulation

When is there an exposure to this hazard?

Typical Conductors

EXPOSED?

- NOT **guarded**:
 - Physical separation such as a metal cover or lid
- NOT **isolated**:
 - Within an unsafe distance (RAB, MAD, or AFB)
- NOT **insulated**:
 - ONLY trust insulation YOU:
 - Select, inspect, test, maintain in good condition



When are insulated wires safe?

NEVER!

“ONLY trust insulation for thermal or shock protection YOU bring with you at the time of performing the task!”

March 1981

- Filed the largest personal liability lawsuit of its time
- Betting lines in the gambling houses across the US in favor of the utility.
 - Argument in essence: “Surely power lines in clear view of the public should be respected and given clear space.”
- Jury took just 63 minutes to decide.
 - Awarded \$2.5 million of the \$3 million requested.
 - No future medical payments included

Polling of the jury by local media: Why?

Common theme of their answers:

“The utility should have warned him and not assumed he knew how to recognize the hazard or know what to do when he did”

*“Even when in plain sight, if the wires aren’t insulated (aka *installed safe*), ***shouldn’t the public be warned?***”*

One Major Positive Outcome:

Within weeks utilities across the country began including safety information about the hazards of overhead lines in their monthly billing.

Although Craig’s life was forever changed, it was this simple fact that gave him solace to endure what lie ahead.

“Imagine the thousands of lives I saved.”

How does this impact us today?

As facility owners and managers, we should remember ...

- It is that same untrained public and mindset that still enters our plants to perform work near similar hazards.

It would be prudent to ask

- What do they know?
- Do I as their *responsible host* understand what they don't know?

2019 ESW presentation documented alarming statistics.

OSHA reported electrical fatalities declined 45% 2011-2017

- Approximately 2/3 (465) of the fatalities were to workers in non-electrical job titles
- Most cited human factor was “misjudging a hazardous situation”

Summarized:

- This group either did not recognize a hazard or ignored it altogether
- Need training in electrical hazard recognition and avoidance.

This presenter would add:

- *“Employers must provide clear guidance by both policy and procedure”*

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Well, good things can come from bad events, but ...

Bad events don't need to happen!

Bad events still have consequences.

“People with severe spinal cord injuries are 69% more apt to die of infection.”

Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission - 2015

After 42 years of pain and suffering, in 2017, Craig succumbed to a massive infection.



Craig Kroon Van Diest

1955 – 2017

Much loved brother-in law and friend

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Questions?

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