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# Letters



**Leigh**

I read your editorial about the Waco incident. You nailed it well. My first thought following the News report was to wonder if their lift could have been secured to the barge with chains to bollards or huge tie downs like eye bolts... anything that would or could have prevented slipping or rolling into the water.

Whenever we set my Niftylift TM40 on a steep slope I plan the set to the hill angle and secure with chains, ropes, winch cable and wheel chocks and the boom will not be raised until the frame is level. Feel free to publish this comment if you wish.

**Sherm Anderson**

Best Tree Service, USA

*This letter came in following the current editorial on Vertikal.net regarding the variable advice of when and when not to wear a harness and generalised rules such as sites that simply insist on 100 percent tie off rules. Ed*

*The following letter followed our report of an incident in which an Emsley crane experienced a bent boom on a job in Rotherham, UK. Quick thinking on the part of the crane operator ensured that no one was hurt in the incident and that no damage was done to anything but the crane. John Emsley promptly wrote to us explaining the background to the incident in the hope that others will benefit from understanding what happened.*

Ed

**Dear Sir**

Ref: New Tesco, Rotherham

"Our crane was involved in an incident which you have featured and I'd like to clarify several points raised.

The 80 tonne Demag crane was set on its best working jib length duty for working between 18 and 20m radius. This is 20% of section 1, 20% of section 2 and 74% of sections 3 and 4, giving a jib length of 31.4m with the safe load code number 9.

This configuration was set to the method statement and lifting plan and has been confirmed and checked by site and the HSE. Unfortunately our crane was retracting piles with a pile extraction hammer under a CPA hire. Our crane was given a shock load from the hammer causing the jib failure. The crane driver realised there was a problem and reacted immediately by slewing round to a safe area to rest the jib. Our company have immediately stopped this crane operation."

Yours faithfully

**John Emsley**  
Director

**Dear Sir,**

Just wanted to write and say that I read the letter published in the latest issue of Cranes & Access from John Egnatz which referred to the death of Steven Lillicrap and was moved to re-read and then check out the references that he made to reports on www.vertikal.net. I must say that the video recording made by Steven's mother was one of the most moving and at the same time stunning things that I have watched in a long time. It should be used much more widely as part of safety programmes the world over. I am referring people to it and salute you for hosting this on your website. I do think you should draw more attention to it or something. I have been a regular reader of both the magazines and the website for the past 18 months but was totally unaware that you had material like this available.

I would encourage anyone who has not read the reports and seen that video to go do it now.

Thanks to you and your team

**Jeff Linquist**

Qatar

*The letter he refers to was published in Cranes & Access February (16.1) page 68*

**Dear Sir**

I noticed your editorial regarding the use of harnesses in different situations, and while you make some very valid points I do not believe that there is a simple one size fits all solution. In fact this might well be construed from some of the points you make. The problem is that vague or indeterminate rules lead to sloppy work practices. While I understand that in a perfect world each team leader would set their own rules for the job at hand in reality safety requires strong clear guidance so all we can do is hand down rules that are good for say 90 percent of the time and hope that a good risk assessment will highlight the times when the rule should be overridden.

This subject merits a great deal more discussion than I quite frankly have time for here - but keep up the good work and keep the thought provoking nature of your publication rolling.

Yours

**John Everly**



# Readers Letters



**Good Morning Mr Editor,**

Liebherr-Werk GmbH of Ehingen, Germany, is to be congratulated for producing an Interim and a Final Report into the Fatal Incident in Brazil on Wednesday 27th November 2013. So these Two Reports are worthy of further analysis.

This particular Liebherr LR11350 Crawler Crane was rigged as a Suspended Derrick Boom (SDB) with 102m Main Boom and 42m Back Boom. This model of Crawler Crane is an excellent machine and very safe too with its exemplary LICCON control system. However as this Fatal Incident confirms, even a safe crane can be overturned by the application of an Unsafe System of Work. Please allow me to explain.....

1. The Final Liebherr Report confirms that the LICCON Data Logger had not worked correctly since November 2012.
2. The Track Loading calculations showed a mass of circa 2,185 tonnes Gross Crane Weight and a force of circa 39.02 Tonnes per Square Metre (Tm<sup>2</sup>) applied to the ground through each of Two Tracks. Yet this very high imposed load of 39.02 Tm<sup>2</sup> was not spread over a wider area by the Application of Steel or Hardwood Mats under the Tracks. All of which was necessary due to the ground not being sufficiently stable, all as a result of Heavy Rain in previous days.
3. The Ground then gave way under the Tracks while this LR11350 Crane was travelled forward with a 420t Load suspended on the Hook. When the ground subsided, the Crane inclined out of vertical, which then caused massive overloading of Safety Critical Components such as the Boom Foot Pin Brackets. As a result the entire Crane suffered a catastrophic collapse.

Therefore as no-one else will speak up for these Two Dead Men, I will and what motivates me to do so is this. An accident is only an 'Accident' if it is 'Accidental', but to be 'Accidental' it must be Not-Foreseeable, like Lightning. Yet here we have a high capacity Crawler Crane Travelling forward on Rain Soaked Soft Ground, with a 420t load on the Hook at the end of a 102m Boom, so the leveraged forces on the Boom Foot Pins must have been multiplied many times over. We don't know what these loadings actually were because the LICCON Data Logger had not been working since November 2012. So by any standard this Fatal Incident can never be called an 'Accident' as it



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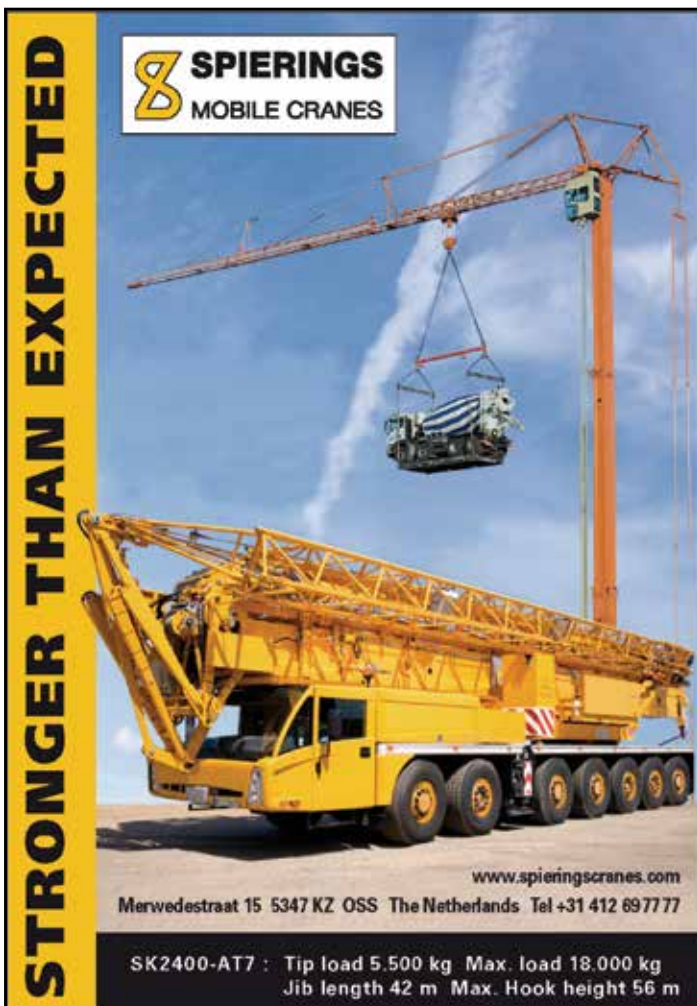
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## Continued

was not Accidental, in fact this series of factors was entirely foreseeable for any Director who cared to look, with the end result being Two Fatalities.

It has been said that "Fatal Incidents are as a result of Human Error" with which I entirely concur. But that then raises the Question of Whose Human Error led to the Two Men Killed by this Crane in Brazil on Wednesday 27th November 2013?

So on 1st January 2014 I wrote a letter to Mr Marcelo Odebrecht the CEO of Odebrecht Construction of Brazil, no reply was received. This is now followed with second letter submitting the following additional questions....

4. Which Director authorised the use of this LR11350 Crane without the LICCON Data Logger working correctly since November 2012?

5. Which Director authorised the R.A.M.S. and Lift Plan for this Crane rigged as SDB, moreover did this series of Lift & Travel movements match the Lift Plan(s)?

6. Which Director authorised the use of this Crane without Steel or Hardwood Mats under the Tracks, while travelling forward with a 420t load on the Hook?

In conclusion, whenever I speak to Senior Executives in the Construction Industry, I get responses like "The Construction Industry is a Dangerous Place to Work". Which it certainly is with Unsafe Systems of Work like scenario above. So as Worker Safety is my Core Value it is my submission that the 8 Men and 2 Women Killed by Cranes or Lifting Operations in the past 110 days, requires the Construction Industry to completely Re-Evaluate how it manages Crane Safety in the future. Because what occurred in Brazil on 27th November 2013 was entirely preventable and foreseeable, moreover it was a Failure of Infrastructure, a Failure of Maintenance and a Failure of Management: Not my words but those of Barrister Sir Anthony Hidden QC after he found near identical circumstances, after Investigating another preventable Disaster, namely the Croydon Train Crash in London on 12th December 1988.

As I have First Hand Experience of a Crane Induced Fatality, may I offer my Personal Condolences to the Family and Children of these Two Dead Men, as I too felt your pain. RIP. Finally and in closing the Construction Industry Worldwide now needs to completely Re-Evaluate how it manages Crane Safety for the Future, based upon Tried and Tested Industry Standards like The LOLER Regulations 1999, British Standard 7121 and Isaac Newton's Laws, because what is needed are 'Safe Systems of Work' ( Not Unsafe).

Yours Sincerely

**Michael J. Ponsonby**

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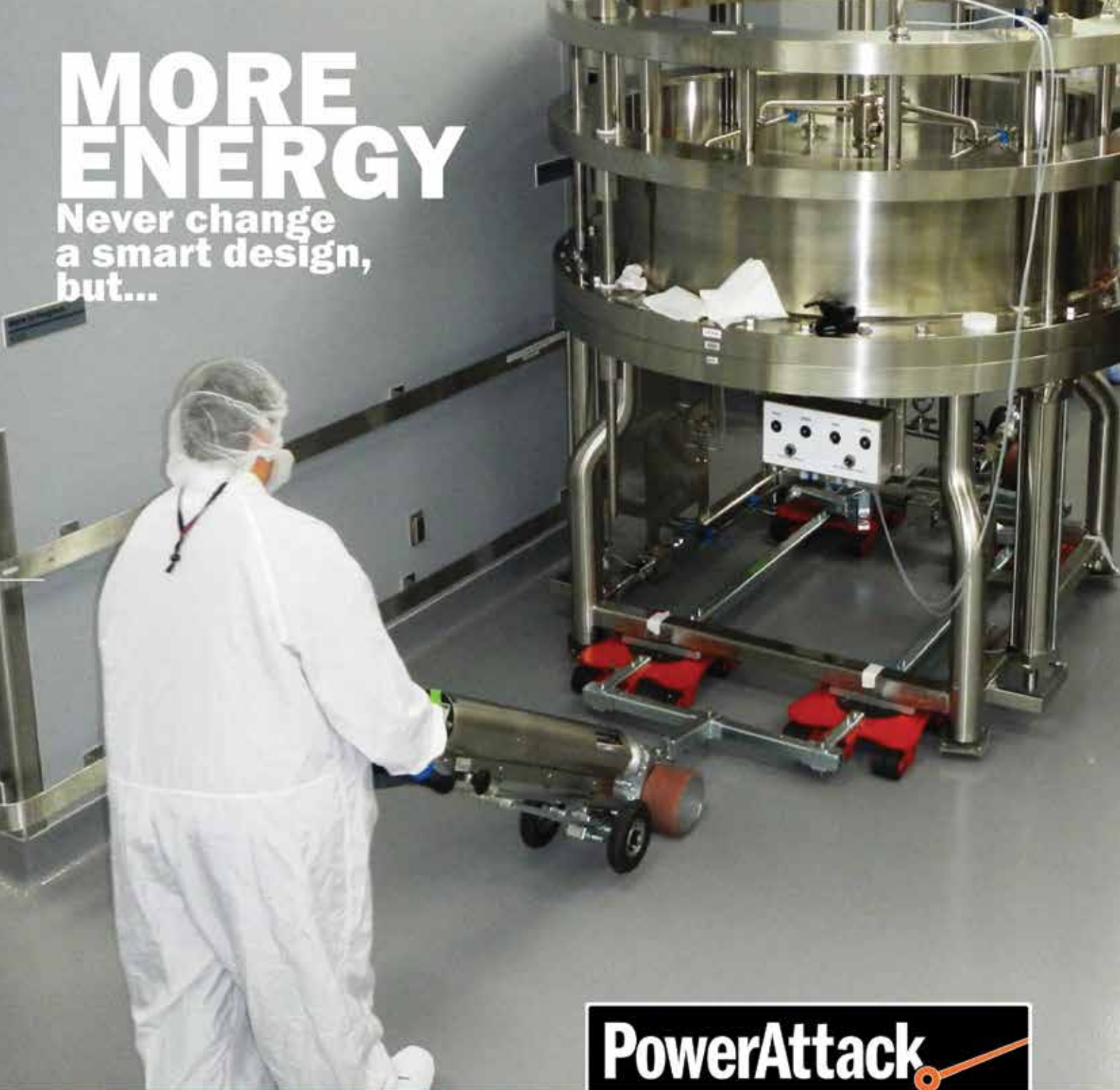
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