

Announcer ([00:02](#)):

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Announcer ([00:15](#)):

Hi everybody, and welcome to the Safety Moment Podcast. I'm Mike Sullivan, your host. My guests today are Mr. Scott Landes, Mr. Benjamin Dierker. Now both gentlemen really don't need no introduction. They will introduce themselves, but they're here to talk today about a book that they recently authored and is now available as of just a few days ago on August 11th, 811 day. No coincidence there. The book is called Holding Back Disaster, and it's all about the damage prevention industry. Before we get into this, and we're going to have obviously thousands of questions for these gentlemen. Before we get into it though, I'd like both to introduce themselves and obviously we've known each other a long time. As weird as it feels, Benjamin, if you don't mind, I'll ask, introduce yourself.

Benjamin Dierker ([01:02](#)):

Yeah, happy to. Thanks for having us on mic. My name is Benjamin Dierker. I am the executive director of the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure, and we call that All. We are the only infrastructure focused think tank in the United States that does public policy work around the systems that keep our lights on and power the economy and keep us safe.

Announcer ([01:24](#)):

Thanks, Benjamin. And over to you, Scott.

Scott Landes ([01:27](#)):

Yeah, thanks, Mike. Again, thanks for having us. And yeah, my name's Scott Landes and I am, I guess, currently an author and serving on a couple nonprofit boards as well as the advisory group for the Damage Prevention Professional Certification Program and have been in the industry since the early '80s.

Announcer ([01:54](#)):

Would you classify yourself as currently unemployed though, Scott?

Scott Landes ([01:59](#)):

Yeah. Yes, actually I would.

Announcer ([02:01](#)):

So there you go. So this is like a volunteer thing. Are you looking for work, I guess? Is that what

Scott Landes ([02:06](#)):

It is? Yeah.

Announcer ([02:08](#)):

No.

Scott Landes ([02:08](#)):

Yeah.

Announcer ([02:10](#)):

Well, guys, thanks for doing this. We tried to do a little while ago and I had to back out at the very last minute, so I apologize for that, but here we are today. I've been looking forward to this conversation for quite some time. To jump right into it, holding back disaster. How long were you thinking about this, Scott? I mean, I'm sure this was your initiative and maybe it wasn't, maybe Benjamin reached out to you, but I think you reached out to Benjamin for this.

Scott Landes ([02:38](#)):

Well, actually, it was your fault because when Benjamin and I were both at the 40th anniversary, he actually brought up the concept of doing a book. And it was when I was in the middle of working on my other book. And so the first response was, no. One book is already too much. But then he proposed the idea of having a co-author. And so then I said, okay, well, let's keep talking. And so it really came out of that because you had us both up there and Benjamin brought it up and here we are.

Announcer ([03:19](#)):

So Alberta was a catalyst once again for something. Yeah, right out of left field.

Benjamin Dierker ([03:23](#)):

You can't stop being a leader.

Announcer ([03:27](#)):

No, but whether you want to or not. And Benjamin, we met each other some months before that. And yeah, exactly. You guys were both at our 40th anniversary and safety conference, which is two and a half years ago now. I had to do a little bit of mental math there, but yeah, two and a half years ago already. So yeah. And had you ever written a book before, Benjamin?

Benjamin Dierker ([03:50](#)):

Nope. I've kind of thought about it and stalled on a few ideas, but the co-author was the right dynamic for me. So we knocked it out in about a year, year and a half, and here we are.

Announcer ([04:03](#)):

Now, who had the idea? I mean, obviously the book idea, but who had the idea for how the book is written? It begins with a person getting ready to go to work, basically. Who had the idea for that?

Scott Landes ([04:16](#)):

That was Benjamin. I mean, that was genius because it really gets you interested versus just opening up with history and how things work. It creates an emotional bond and he did it for all the chapters and he's a way better writer in that area. And so yeah, I think that's a very magical part of the book and going to get people to actually read the whole thing.

Announcer ([04:43](#)):

I think it was too. And I was quite honored to be brought into the process and just as an editorial review, and I was given an opportunity to comment and sincerely appreciated that to be part of it. As I said earlier, this is, to my knowledge, the first book on this subject ever. Is that correct?

Benjamin Dierker ([05:08](#)):

I would say this is the first of its kind. When we were going through the process of finishing writing and editing and talking to publishers, we came across a lot of more technical manuals, things that are written for engineers or that explain maybe a portion of the industry. But our goal was really to make it the first of its kind, to really take comprehensively what is the entire ecosystem? How does it all work together? And not just who the stakeholders are, but how does public awareness work? How is education and culture a part of this industry? And then to also tell some of the real stories and human impact. I think that this probably is the first work of that type.

Announcer ([05:49](#)):

And you've got roughly 50 years of comprehensive history, right? But I mean, it goes before that. I mean, we've been hitting buried infrastructure since we first started putting it in the ground, and that goes back longer than 50 years. But you also had a lot of, beyond content, obviously, you also had a lot of people like myself, connections within the industry to reach out to and bounce ideas off of. Was that always going to be part of it or did that sort of come along organically? Maybe we should reach out to so-and-so and see what they have to say? Or was that something that was a design?

Benjamin Dierker ([06:30](#)):

Yeah. As much as Scott might want to credit me for the overarching idea of storytelling in the book, I'll credit him. He wanted to make sure this is grounded in the real experience of the people who are literally holding back disaster every day. And so from the very moment we started this project, there was kind of a non-negotiable that this was going to be interview-based, research-based, and actually tell the living, breathing stories through the parties who lived and breathed it. So Scott kicked off interviewing tons of folks. We did peer review through this whole process. And there's not a piece of this book that's just me and Scott. The whole thing is really a collaborative effort that I think is kind of a manifestation of what damage prevention is and can look like. So I'm really happy with that dynamic.

Announcer ([07:16](#)):

What about you, Scott? Was that something that you had in the back of your mind before you put pen to paper, so to speak?

Scott Landes ([07:23](#)):

Yeah, it really was because as you know, I am not really an expert in any of those areas, but I usually know who is. So that was really what I was trying to do is reach out and find the right people who had the firsthand experience and help coordinate it and then step back and take a big look at it, the big picture look. But I'm not the guy who can tell you how to go out and locate or run a one call center, but I know who can.

Announcer ([07:53](#)):

If you know anybody who can run a one call center, let me know because I like to figure that out soon. I've been only at it 15 years. Thankfully, I have some really great people I work with and they know

exactly what to do. But as you begin writing this, I mean, it's a monumental task here. I mean, you're putting pen to paper, so to speak, but what's the process you went through or process for our friends in the US? What's a process you went through here? Because this isn't just you start writing. You have to have a pretty good idea of how this is going to be presented.

Benjamin Dierker ([08:28](#)):

We had a lot of ideas. A lot of them didn't make it in the book. We did not know what this book was going to look like when we started, or at least we didn't have this version of it in mind. One of our first meetings, we had just a number of calls and we collaborated virtually on 99% of this book. We tried to write an outline. What do we think the flow of this book should be? What should the chapters cover? That outline got blown up three or four times. Even three months before we handed it off to publisher, we inserted a whole new chapter that didn't exist before that. Some of the chapters we did have, we rewrote or broke into multiple pieces. So the process was messy and it was really born out of a lot of feedback. So as we kind of realized everyone was touching on this one topic and it's really not well covered, it became a chapter.

([09:24](#)):

And I wanted to try to stitch the storytelling together in it, as Scott mentioned. So some of the ways we initially conceived of it was we draft a chapter that was a bit more technical or what the explanation of the thing is.

Scott Landes ([09:40](#)):

And then

Benjamin Dierker ([09:40](#)):

Kind of go back through it and see if we can tie a narrative arc to it or insert a new introduction that puts a thematic framing so that when you read it, you've already kind of primed your brain for that chapter. A lot of that happened after doing the work of the chapter. So iterative and messy.

Scott Landes ([09:58](#)):

And I think from a workload standpoint, we kind of divided the chapters up and each of us took the primary lead on a chapter. And then each of us then would go back and look through it and add our two cents worth after doing all the research and putting it together. And that seemed to work really well.

Announcer ([10:22](#)):

So you found a rhythm coming as you were going through this? And what was that chapter that you put in towards the end you alluded to, Benjamin?

Benjamin Dierker ([10:30](#)):

Yeah. The most recent chapter I think we added to it was the technology chapter. We had obviously covered technology. It's an element of the one call centers. It's an element of locating. It's an element of every one of these chapters, Sue and mapping. But we wanted to treat it as really a separate section because we broke the book, and this is another way we did it. Way late in the process, we realized the book probably works best in two halves. So readers, there's not like part one and part two, but thematically there is. Part one is like explainer on who and what the industry is. And

Scott Landes ([11:06](#)):

Then we

Benjamin Dierker ([11:06](#)):

Put a historic image gallery right in the middle so that people can kind of have a break for their eyes to look at something interesting. And then the second half is really kind of the future of the industry and really told by the industry itself. We inserted survey data. We had large sections that come from quotes from people, but we inserted it in that one kind of a, what does the technology look like that we currently have? What will we have access to? What does the next 10 years look like? That was the most interesting, but also the most recent chapter that was added.

Announcer ([11:38](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I can't imagine when you're going through this prose, and we talk about writer's block and that kind of thing. But at some point, and I suspect anyway, it'd be early on when you're doing something like this, you feel the weight of what you're doing. And you get to that point, will I ever get this done? Is this ever going to actually be published? Why am I doing this? How often did that. I mean, probably every day. Okay. But how often really did that come up?

Scott Landes ([12:10](#)):

I don't know. For me, the biggest struggle kind of related to that was trying to decide how much is enough. Because the reality is most of these chapters could be a book. Yes. And that would be painful for everybody. I thought the most difficult part was to focus on what we thought was needed to give somebody the big picture because our mission wasn't to have a book that makes everybody an expert. It was designed to give everybody the big picture of how it all fits together in all the different parts. And so like I said, it's a lot easier to write a long book than a short book.

Announcer ([12:54](#)):

Yeah, I can imagine. Benjamin, again, this for you, this is the first as well. So did you feel that pressure?

Benjamin Dierker ([13:02](#)):

I did. Some of it was self-imposed. We wanted to make sure that it got out in the world at the right time too. We had a lot of plans for this book that didn't materialize. We were going to release it at a particular conference. We didn't have it ready for that. We had a publisher who we were working with and they ended up pulling out what I would consider at the last minute. But we ended up in a better spot, a better publisher, I would say, better timing. We released a freight one one day. So it kind of worked out in a much more fun way, but we put a lot of deadlines on ourselves, expectations for when we thought we could knock out a chapter and then kind of realized you can't write this type of thing on a deadline. It's finished when it's finished.

([13:43](#)):

And sometimes that was new interviews or peer review. Sometimes that was starting from scratch and realizing we don't know what all the details for Sue and mapping are

Scott Landes ([13:53](#)):

And

Benjamin Dierker ([13:54](#)):

Starting that chapter over. It was a lot, but I never felt like we weren't going to finish it. It was always let's recalibrate for when we do finish this or what it's going to look like.

Announcer ([14:05](#)):

How did you deal with Scott's world traveling? Because I'm assuming he wasn't always available.

Benjamin Dierker ([14:14](#)):

It wasn't a particular concern for me with virtual collaboration. We could be anywhere. I was writing a lot of this book from my bed, much to my wife's dismay.

Announcer ([14:27](#)):

Scott, even though as an unemployed guy, he's still pretty busy. I don't know how he manages that, but you had a lot of engagement. And I mentioned myself included. And again, I really appreciate it. That was a lot of fun. When I saw an email come in and I was asked to review something, "Oh, good. I get to see another little piece of this. I wonder what it's going to say." But you had a lot of people reviewing this and providing feedback, which is so good because obviously it speaks to your level of how you've connected over decades with the industry and how you're highly revered. So there was no anxiety associated with this. How many people roughly did you have chiming in? Because I saw a couple, I mean the usual suspects, but I think there was a lot more than that.

Scott Landes ([15:25](#)):

Benjamin's better with numbers. He may be able to tell you. I can tell you that one of the best resources, we're going back and listening and reviewing a lot of virtual town halls, the ESA Acts town halls, because there was great expert panels on all those. So being able to go through and take things out of that and then follow up with those people. And then we did, as you know, because being up in Canada, make a concerted effort to not make it solely US based. And so we talked to people in Australia, Europe, Canada to try and provide the big picture.

Benjamin Dierker ([16:05](#)):

Yeah. For the numbers, just to speak to that, we probably interviewed and/or quoted from about 45 people.

Announcer ([16:14](#)):

I was thinking 50s. That's pretty darn

Benjamin Dierker ([16:17](#)):

Good. Yeah. We had peer review, full manuscript from what I would put at least at 15 people, which is way above what a typical peer review looks like. Usually it's a smaller panel of three to five. So this was a real collaborative effort, like I said, that we were advised on, steered on, commented on by people, not just like Scott mentioned, not just here, not just this industry, but globally. So kudos to everyone else.

Announcer ([16:48](#)):

How did you keep it under wraps? Because I know we were, for all of us who were engaged in this and brought into the tent, we were sworn to secrecy and I kept my promise. But how did that go? Did anybody have any leaks or was it there anybody pushing this a little bit? Or was it all just kept under wraps?

Benjamin Dierker ([17:11](#)):

Someone will have to tell us.

Scott Landes ([17:13](#)):

Yeah. Right. Yeah. I mean, the only reason for doing that was to try and keep it objective and not have outside influences coming in. So that was really the only reason for it. It's funny because it isn't like some tell-all book or something, but - No.

Announcer ([17:33](#)):

There was some concern about that at one point, but no, not at all. This is about the industry for the industry.

Scott Landes ([17:39](#)):

Right.

Announcer ([17:41](#)):

Yeah. So when you're going through this and doing all the research and you're writing, did anything. I mean, you guys have been around this a while. Scott, especially, you've been at this for many, many years. Did anything come up? You say, "Wow, I didn't know that." Or, "I didn't know it to this degree." And I can't imagine there was a syllable in that book that you weren't familiar with, Scott, but maybe I'm wrong.

Scott Landes ([18:09](#)):

I certainly don't know everything. I've heard about all the parts of it, but when you get into the mapping and the technology and even a little bit of the Sue while I'd been involved in all that, when you start getting deeper into those things, I'm not a technical guy. So there were definitely a lot of things I learned in that process. How

Announcer ([18:30](#)):

About you, Benjamin? You're a little bit more new to all of this.

Benjamin Dierker ([18:33](#)):

Yeah, I would say, I mean, there was tons of stuff I learned. Not glossing over the question, I'm just going to take it a different direction. I think the thing that surprised me most was hearing things from the stakeholders themselves. So it might be an idea I've come across or a concept I knew about, but actually hearing it from the horse's mouth is what was new. We included, like I said, tons of quotes and things like that. But one feature that we included was in the book we call it note to self. It was what the industry would say to their younger self. So you've been in this industry 20, 30, 40 years. What would you say back to yourself or to someone who's just starting out essentially? And it was

Scott Landes ([19:13](#)):

Kind of a

Benjamin Dierker ([19:13](#)):

Way for retrospective, the industry can read its own thoughts, let people see what is some hard won wisdom. So for me, it was interesting to see the same things I've heard or dynamics I've maybe witnessed a little bit actually articulated by the people who are living it. There's just a different approach to it or a different perspective on the same information.

Announcer ([19:36](#)):

What's your view on the industry today as opposed to when you first. And Scott, maybe more a question for you, but for you as well, Benjamin, what's your view on the industry today, Scott, as opposed to, or in contrast, not as opposed, but in contrast to when you were just starting out? It's a long slog in a way. A career is a long stretch, but what's your view on the industry?

Scott Landes ([20:04](#)):

Well, it's a good question. I think the biggest change along the way was when we got 811 and then you guys shortly thereafter followed with clickbeforeyoudig.com, because that allowed the industry to kind of unify and share a message and get out there and be consistent with the message and educating people. Before that, it was just really hard work. Every call center had their own message. And while they were similar, it's like trying to have an ad campaign and have a different ad campaign for every single state and you're getting a different message out there. So that was a really big thing. And then just the advances in technology the last few years really accelerating. And now as an industry, we have to find a way to better embrace all the new technology and kind of break out of the way we've done it before. And that's not unique to this industry.

([21:08](#)):

It's a norm when you're. Yeah.

Announcer ([21:09](#)):

Yeah. What about you, Benjamin? You haven't had as long a view on it, but I'm sure you've seen some things that work and things that don't.

Benjamin Dierker ([21:17](#)):

Yeah. It's not nearly as long as Scott, but I'm just kind of thinking back through

Announcer ([21:23](#)):

The days. None of us are in this as long as Scott.

Benjamin Dierker ([21:25](#)):

That's true. I have nearly a full decade now of studying this from a policy perspective. And I would say that's enough time to see some change, but not a ton of change. What I would say is when I first started learning about this industry, it was really complicated. There were so many different stakeholders and different incentives and different competing interests. And it was really difficult to kind of unweb that. And that's part of the work of the book is to kind of map it out and show people who everyone is, how

they relate to one another and all that kind of stuff. So the underlying dynamics are the exact same. I mean, nothing has changed substantively in how the industry works 10 years since I started looking at it. What I would say is right now is probably the biggest time to be both pessimistic and optimistic at the same time.

(22:17):

And your personality is probably which of those wins out. CGA just yesterday put out new damage cost numbers

(22:25):

And it's estimated \$83 billion, which is right in line with what we put forward in the book. So it's actually, I love seeing that new data. What we put in the book is almost exactly point for point the damage numbers, the cost estimates they use. But the damage numbers also at record highs, that's also from this summer from CGA. You could easily see that cost and damage numbers so high in the face of the 50 and five trying to reduce damages. What are we doing as an industry? You can view that pessimistically, but at the same time, Scott mentioned technology and all these different, the certification program that USP is doing. So many different opportunities for growth and improvement that I would say I tend to be an optimist. I think we're at the best possible moment for damage prevention. Distributed fiber optic sensing, professionalization and certifications.

(23:21):

One call center is doing a lot of the technology and also a lot of the education and resourcing. It's a really good time. There's some really bad data, but that's all going to resolve itself. So I see it just as an interesting mix that kind of is in the eye of the beholder to a certain extent.

Announcer (23:39):

It's interesting you say that. And I share a lot of those sentiments by the way. I just get this sense we're at a turning point. We're approaching a turning point. And I know people will think I'm out to lunch on this, but I think from a technology standpoint, we are at a point where we could almost eliminate the notification center through maybe it's an application process to shrink that. You'll still need a valid ticket to secure a locate, but do you really need all of that middle stuff? I'm digging here. I need to get a locator and I go into an application to select that locator. I think that is possible right now today. I think the technology exists right now today. And maybe there are laws or legislation, regulations in place that prohibit us from doing that. Or some may say that there's a great deal of interest not to go forward and be able to do that.

(24:54):

But I do think we are at a turning point or very close to one. And to Scott's point, prior to 811, click before you dig, there was a lot of competition for awareness and we are all saying something similar or the same, but not quite the same. And now we have that opportunity to say one thing or just two things. Given the way the 811, we couldn't use it here.

(25:24):

But at the same time, and I think this is crazy because we're all trying to achieve the same thing, which is public worker and community safety. There seems to be competition in that space and turf, which makes no sense to me. And I don't get it. I just don't get it. And we're competing with brands that shouldn't be competing. We're trying to. I've said before, forget about Utility Safety Partners. Forget about USP. And that brand is way over there somewhere. What do we want people to do? And we want them to click before you dig. That's what's got to be out there. Until something better comes along,

that's it. That's it. And I think something better is literally just around the corner. We just have to have somebody do it. But yet Utility Safety Partners competes with that brand. Why do we do that to ourselves?

(26:24):

Or another one call center or notification center competes with that brand. It doesn't make sense to me. It's too bad. And I think we get, at the end of the day, we get in the way of ourselves. We're tripping over our own feet and for reasons I can't understand. But that is human nature or human nature that Cher Kirk would tell me I speak like somebody else. I don't pronounce my Hs, but that's human nature that we do get in the way of ourselves. And when I see the collaboration you had on this book, not just yourselves, but those other 45 people, that's people getting out of the way. They are coming together to do something good, to do one thing, to produce something. So that gives me hope. That gives me hope that we will get out of the way of ourselves. And I look forward to more young people getting into this.

(27:22):

And we mentioned, or Scott, you mentioned the damage prevention professional certification. And I hope that's a catalyst to do that. I hope it's a catalyst for people who are in the industry to stay and become better at what they do, but I do hope it becomes a catalyst to intrigue new people and new fresh minds, fresh ideas. Because if you look around the room, there's a lot of people who look like me and Scott and too few who look like Benjamin. And that needs to change. So this book in that regard, I think opens that door. It creates that interest. Something like we talked about the DPPC, that creates some interest. But this book creates that interest. And I'm hopeful that it's able to move forward in that way. Now you've written one book, Scott. You written two books, Scott. Are you going to write another one?

Scott Landes (28:23):

No comment at this time.

Announcer (28:26):

Well, they say every person should build a house, plant a tree, write a book. So have you done all those three things?

Scott Landes (28:34):

I've not built a house. That's why this one's still standing up. If I were to build a house, it would be a big problem. If you call it tent a house, then I'm there.

Announcer (28:44):

Or maybe a forage with some blankets with your grandsons. Yeah.

Scott Landes (28:47):

Yeah, exactly.

Announcer (28:48):

How about you, Benjamin? Have you done the proverbial build a house, plant a tree? Now you've written a book?

Benjamin Dierker ([28:53](#)):

No, but I have some other book ideas in the works, so there might just be another one or two coming.

Announcer ([29:02](#)):

I love the idea. And I've talked to Scott about this. I've had a book idea in my mind for a very long time. I don't have the time right now to write it, but someday soon I hope so. And whether or not it's a bestseller doesn't really matter, but I need to write it for me and if somebody picks it up. Before we go, I wanted to talk about finding a publisher. So what's that like? I mean, I have no idea how this whole process works. Okay, you write your book, you get the engagement, you do the editing. Now you got to get a publisher. How do you pedal that? Especially to somebody that probably has no idea what the hell you're talking about.

Scott Landes ([29:42](#)):

Well, I'll first say that I was a complete failure at that. I was unable to do that with my first book and self-publish. So it was all Benjamin. He was relentless in a search for a publisher. And the right. Publisher. So you can explain how you did it.

Benjamin Dierker ([30:03](#)):

Yeah. We started with who we knew who had written books and kind of asked some questions. So I think you always need other people to guide you. Almost nobody creates something from scratch. I went through a friendly contact. Honestly, the first publisher I approached was not my plan at all. It was like an accident. I reached out to somebody and said, "Hey, do you know of a publisher?" And they said, "My organization publishes." So he just put me in touch with someone immediately. And we went several steps with them, but that one didn't work out.

([30:39](#)):

I then turned to what I thought would be the best mix for this book, which was kind of academic and professional publishers, rather than like a Simon & Schuster Penguin Random House, like somebody who would publish a novel. I think because there's technical aspects to this, there's training application, there's even classroom application for universities. It made sense to me to approach publishers like that. A lot of research, a lot of cold outreach, but we actually had two offers for publication for this book and went with the one we thought would give us most creative control and keep the heart of the book what it was. One of the other publishers, their process looked a lot different. They had peer review after we handed off the manuscript altogether. And so we didn't know where it might go. And a lot of people don't understand who the peers are in this industry.

([31:32](#)):

And so we wanted to make sure that the people who are actually living it, operating it, doing the work, were the ones whose voice is represented and not a professor or somebody who's in an adjacent industry who maybe interfaces with this to some extent. So yeah, we did cold outreach and submitted a proposal, explained what the book was going to do, submitted a sample chapter. They got feedback from peer reviewers. We got some great feedback that the book was going to be helpful for the industry. We got some not so great feedback that they shouldn't publish this book. And the good feedback won out. We took the next couple steps, signed a contract and handed over the manuscript.

Announcer ([32:16](#)):

Now you had a foreword written by somebody and an afterward written by some prominent people. Tell me how that went. How did you reach out to the former, I think it was a former secretary, right? Defense? Was that

Benjamin Dierker ([32:30](#)):

It? Yep. The former secretary of transportation in the US. We, again,

Announcer ([32:36](#)):

Friendly - That's no small feat. That's huge.

Benjamin Dierker ([32:38](#)):

Yeah. I'll let Scott speak to the afterward, but the forward, we reached out to a lot of people who we thought would validate and commend this industry well. And it's really hard to get prominent people. We had a lot of cold outreach that stayed cold. We never heard back. But yes, Secretary of Transportation, Mary E. Peters, was the right fit because she was the one here in the US at the helm when 811 was rolled out. And so it wasn't just that she was a cabinet secretary or that she did work in this related field, but she was the one who was there when this was all happening. And fortunately, my boss, who you know well, Mike Brigham McCown, he spent a lot of time at USDOT.

([33:30](#)):

And he helped me broker a friendly introduction. And she was more than happy to help because this is an important industry and it's important for the future, but it also touches so many different issues and areas. And it was important for us to have that tie-in that somebody. The prominence of the forward writer isn't for us, it's for the industry. It's so that people who are reading this book can say, wow, the stakes matter enough that people at higher positions in government and industry cared enough to participate in this. And so not praise for Scott or I, I think it's just validation to the industry. But Scott, I'd love for you to tell us about the afterward.

Scott Landes ([34:07](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, sure. So yeah, we were lucky to get Bob Kipp to do the afterward, who was the original president of the CGA and led it for, I don't know, 15, 20 years, a long time. And I thought that was really important, especially as an afterward, because he was there at the beginning of the CGA. It really helped guide it through and was there for the 811 launch and all those things. So he had that perspective of looking back at the whole big picture and also having a bit of the Canadian viewpoint since he was a Canadian by birth and I think is now a US citizen. So that perspective was really great. So there's really nobody who I think could bring that same perspective as what Bob did. So fortunately he was willing to do it and I think it did a good job.

([34:59](#)):

So

Announcer ([35:00](#)):

No, he did.

Benjamin Dierker ([35:01](#)):

I would just tie two threads together here. Mike, you mentioned new young people coming into this industry. The reason that we put Bob Kipp at the afterward is that you've read the whole book now and it's kind of like your invitation to join the industry. And so his position at CGA is kind of the optimal entry point. You've learned about the industry, you see what all these stakeholders are, join one of the many organizations, join CGA, become a member, participate on committees. It was intended to be that kind of closing thought that's not just for its own sake, but it's actually achieving one of those goals of the book.

Announcer ([35:40](#)):

And to have people of that caliber, I mean, obviously it speaks a lot to you guys, but it speaks a lot to the book and why it was needed. And I was honored, as I said earlier, to provide the forward for the online ordering. And with that, how can people buy the book? Where is it available?

Benjamin Dierker ([36:05](#)):

Everywhere. If you type in Holding Back Disaster, you will find that book. We're happy to share the publisher link. It's through Rutledge. It's on Amazon. It's at Barnes & Noble online. It's at everywhere you could think to find a book.

Announcer ([36:18](#)):

What's next guys? Are you going to a major world tour to do an autograph sessions or?

Scott Landes ([36:25](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I'm working out my hand just in case. Yeah.

Benjamin Dierker ([36:31](#)):

We do have a number of other podcasts and some speaking roles that we've been honored to participate in. So we'll be talking about this book probably for a few months now, at least.

Announcer ([36:41](#)):

Well, we'll be having our safety conference in Calgary in end of March, I believe, 2027. And Scott, I know you're going to be there. And Benjamin, if you can make it, wonderful. My board members will be receiving a copy of the book in November and some of my colleagues as well. I want to make sure that some people get copies of the book. And I'm sure there'll be a long line of fans at our event waiting for a signed copy from you guys. So make sure that your arms and your hands are warmed up, especially in a cold March days in Calgary. Who knows? It might be 80 degrees or it might be minus something. So anyway, guys, thanks for doing this. And I applaud you both for this achievement. It really is. It's a major achievement. And thank you so much on behalf of the industry for doing it.

([37:44](#)):

I think it's high time somebody did. And I'm just waiting now for the screenplay to see if we know Ron Howard's going to pick it up and it's going to be a major motion picture. It won't be long. And who would play you guys in a movie if it came out?

Benjamin Dierker ([38:04](#)):

These are good questions I was not prepared to answer.

Announcer ([38:08](#)):

I'm curious. I mean, Benjamin, who would play you? I mean, Matthew McConaughey, maybe.

Benjamin Dierker ([38:14](#)):

There's a running joke casting in my own family that I would be Michael Sarah if I'm ever played in a movie.

Announcer ([38:24](#)):

How about you, Scott?

Scott Landes ([38:25](#)):

Well, I'm going to go with who I would want to play me. It would be like a younger Harrison Ford, but yes.

Announcer ([38:31](#)):

Oh, there you go. That's who I had pegged. Either that or maybe Martin Short. Wasn't sure. You get a Canadian in there, right? Anyway guys, thanks for doing this and kudos to you for getting it done and getting it done in a really good and big way.

Scott Landes ([38:47](#)):

Thank you. Thanks.

Announcer ([38:52](#)):

That's going to wrap things up on the Safety Moment podcast. I want to thank our producer, Stories and Strategies, and I hope you choose to follow this podcast on any directory you're listening on, and please do leave a rating. I also want to thank our guests, Mr. Benjamin Durker, Mr. Scott Landis, for joining me today. You can follow us on all the social media channels that you are familiar with and all the profiles. We are on X at utilities_safety or Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook. If you'd like to send us a note, maybe you have an episode idea, you can email us at info@utilitysafety.ca and podcast in the subject header, that'll get right to us. I'm Mike Sullivan, the president of Utility Safety Partners. Click to know what's above and below. One click costs you nothing. Not clicking, that could cost you everything.