



Training Solutions, Delivered!

# **ONE WILL DIE:**

## ***The John Martin Story***

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet  
& Quiz**

**Item Number: 3280**  
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***This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.***

## **PREPARING FOR THE MEETING**

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

## **CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION**

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

**3280 ONE WILL DIE:  
*The John Martin Story*  
FACT SHEET**

**LENGTH: 18 MINUTES**

**PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:**

The choices we make each day can have a huge impact on ourselves and others. Something as simple as using a piece of protective equipment or refusing to go along with an unsafe co-worker can literally prevent tragedy. John Martin's story is an unforgettable illustration of the horrific injuries and life-changing consequences that can result when we make unsafe choices. While servicing a pump to a chemical line during a maintenance procedure, John and a co-worker decided not to follow the safe work practices that would have secured the line and protected them from injury. When John removed the cover to the pump, the superheated corrosive substance inside the line spewed out and he was severely burned on more than 70 percent of his body. Against all odds, John survived, but he suffered two torturous months in a hospital's burn unit and has had numerous operations on his badly burned eyes.

This program brings the dramatic true story surrounding John's incident to life, including the events that led up to the tragedy, a reenactment of the incident, testimony from his co-workers and the impact the incident had on John, his family and his co-workers. Viewers will learn valuable safety lessons about off-job distractions, speaking up when co-workers take risks, the consequences of ignoring required safe work practices, the importance of wearing appropriate PPE and allowing co-workers to influence our decisions about safety.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

After watching the program, viewers should be able to explain the following:

- The events that led up to John's incident;
- The contributing factors and safety lessons to be learned from the incident;
- How the incident affected John, his family and his co-workers;
- How the choices we make each day can impact ourselves and others.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE:**

**THE DAY BEFORE**

- On the day before John Martin's incident, a pump at the mill where he worked started to leak. Two maintenance workers attempted to stop the leak, but couldn't.
- The two workers surmised that the entire system and cooking vessel would have to be drained in order to replace the worn out impeller casing. They wrapped the pump with a roll of felt to slow down the leak until the repair could be made.
- As conditions at the mill deteriorated, John Martin was at home, unaware of the troubling developments. In fact, he had just returned from windsurfing and was planning to return to the beach with his wife the next day after he got off work.
- Meanwhile, a group of personnel from production, maintenance and operations discussed the leaking pump.
- The process engineer argued that they couldn't afford to be down for 36 hours to isolate the pump from the cooking vessel. He proposed that isolating the pump from the cooking vessel by closing the up-line valve was a "reasonable compromise" so the job could be done in eight hours.
- Marion Mathews, the maintenance worker who would likely perform the procedure, objected to this decision and threatened to call in sick the next day.
- After the process engineer suggested that he find someone else to "get the job done," the maintenance foreman decided John Martin was the right man for the job.

**WHY JOHN WAS CHOSEN FOR THE JOB**

- John would later say that there was a reason that he was assigned to the job. He was a young mechanic known to take shortcuts to get the job done.
- He was known as somebody who could get the job done. "Did they know that when they put me on the job that morning? Yeah, they sure did. They could depend on it."

- John had honed his risky job habits as an electrician and construction worker prior to his seven years at the mill. He brought his “just get it done” work habits with him to the mill, where he was able to continue them despite the company’s written safety program.

### **RISK TAKERS VS. SAFE WORKERS**

- At the time of the incident, there were a lot of risks taken that shouldn’t have been taken, according to Harry. (Harry was John’s co-worker who was assisting him when the incident occurred.)
- Marion noted that there were two types of workers at the mill at the time: those who were safe and those who were unsafe. Sometimes he and John fell in “either or the other category.”
- There were a lot of “show-offs” and some who did just enough to get the job done so they could move onto something else, Harry added.
- “We laughed at the ones that tried to be safe; called them names,” said Marion. “The saying was ‘bogging the job down.’ Don’t bog the job down—that means being slow.”
- Once Harry had told Marion that safety was a “part of each job, not an obstacle to each job.” Marion responded by saying that that was the problem he had with Harry—he dragged a job down.
- “Slow poke” or “dragging the job out” were terms applied to Harry, but he said he was actually trying to look the job over as closely as possible to make sure what they were doing was safe.
- When certain workers are allowed to take shortcuts and circumvent safety procedures, it creates a dangerous situation. It causes all employees to question the company’s commitment to worker safety and places those who follow the rules in the position of constantly having to defend their desire to work safely.
- This was exactly the position Harry found himself in on the morning of June 7, when he was paired up with John Martin.

### **JOHN & HARRY DISCUSS THE JOB**

- On the morning of the incident, John asked Harry how they “got stuck” with the job. Harry told him that the other guys came in early to make sure they got other jobs and that Marion had called in sick.
- When John said he didn’t understand why Marion called in, since the job wouldn’t be that bad, Harry said, “This is a dangerous job, John. We need to do this right, especially since the cooking vessel is not drained, that one valve is all we got.”
- “We can’t even see the valve from here,” continued Harry. “We should take the time to visually verify that it’s been secured.”
- “C’mon Harry! You can’t be serious, that valve is four stories up from here. I intend to have this done by four o’clock. I’m not working OT, not today,” John said.
- In an effort to reassure Harry, John then said “they’ll tell us when it’s closed. Don’t worry.” He told Harry to go get the tools they would need while he locked out the electrical disconnect.
- John told the process engineer they were preparing to pull open pump number nine and asked if everything was safe to proceed. The process engineer told him they’d let him know when the operator had isolated the pump.
- “See Harry, everything’s going to be fine. Let’s get moving!”

### **EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE INCIDENT**

- As John locked out the disconnect on pump nine, the shift supervisor told him that the control room had reported the valve closed and that the line was draining.
- When John asked if it was safe to proceed, the supervisor said, “Yeah, I’m sure. Time’s a wasting!”
- John commented later that Harry probably would have questioned having just one lock on the disconnect, but John was pushing him. They had asked different people all morning if the job was safe to do instead of taking the responsibility of making sure themselves.
- When they got up to the job, they removed the bolts on the coupling connecting the pump to the motor. They didn’t verify that they had the right breaker pulled because they just assumed it was, according to John.
- Based on their conversations with others, John and Harry assumed the up-line valve was closed and it was. They also assumed it was secured so it would stay closed while they worked on the pump, but it wasn’t.
- The valve that controlled the flow to pump number nine was operated from a control room 68 feet above the pump.
- To secure the valve, a pipe-fitter placed a blocked pipe into the slotted valve screw to prevent it from being re-opened remotely. After initially reporting the valve closed, the pipe-fitter then had trouble making his blocking pipe fit.

- When the control room operator noted that his computer screen showed the valve shut, the pipe-fitter asked why the blocking pipe wouldn't fit if the valve was fully seated.
- The control room operator, who was new to the job, replied in frustration that he wasn't sure why and looked around for someone to help him.
- "It's no good. I don't think the valve is fully seated. Why don't you stroke the valve and see if it will re-seat?" the pipe-fitter asked.
- The operator responded "Okay, I'm going to stroke the valve. Here it goes open." He then punched the key on the computer that opened the valve.

### **THE INCIDENT**

- As John removed the last bolt on the pump cover, his wrench began to shake. He looked at Harry as they both realized what was about to happen.
- A big flow of the "black liquor" burst from the impeller and pinned John against a feeder pipe behind him. Harry was also splashed but able to jump off the platform and run to the maintenance shop.
- John screamed in agony as his body was drenched by the hot, black liquid.
- The shift supervisor stormed into the control room and screamed, "What are you doing? Close the valve; you're killing people down there!"
- "Yeah right, I know it's my first day and all, but..." replied the operator. "Can't you hear them screaming?!" interrupted the supervisor. "Close the valve. They're being boiled alive!"
- As the operator hit the key to close the valve, which would take 30 seconds to close, the supervisor called emergency response.
- Meanwhile, John staggered through the surrounding black mist and fell from the platform to the ground below. Over 70 percent of his body was burned and he had lost vision in both eyes.
- His co-workers tried to help by cutting off his clothes and spraying him with a water hose. They then watched helplessly as John and Harry were loaded into the ambulance.

### **THE TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL**

- On the way to the hospital, Harry could see "meat" hanging off of John. "I was trying to see on myself if I was burned that bad or not, and I could see that I wasn't burned nowhere near as bad as John," he would later say.
- In the ambulance, John was aware of the extent of his injuries. He was also well aware that another employee who had been injured performing the same procedure died of comparable injuries after seven days, so John fully expected to die as well.
- "As I'm heading to the hospital, I'm thinking I have about seven days to live, so that was the first thing to tell my wife when she arrived—plan on me not being here in about seven days," John would later comment.
- The mill had difficulty finding someone to inform John's wife of the incident, but finally got an apprentice to tell her. Someone from the mill called Harry's wife and told her that he was one of "two people in an accident and one's probably going to die."

### **TRAGEDIES MAKE NO DISTINCTIONS**

- "Two have been hurt; one's going to die." Now that's the kind of phone call nobody should have to answer.
- Sometimes when we hear a story like John's, it's tempting to minimize its relevance to us. It's easy to say, "Well he took too many risky chances, but I'd never do something like that."
- Keep in mind that tragedy makes no distinctions for the track record of its victims. It makes no difference if you have been taking shortcuts for 20 years like John or decide to "go along with it once" like Harry; either way, the consequences are severe, far-reaching and life-changing.

### **AFTERMATH OF THE INCIDENT**

- John defied the odds and against all predictions, he survived.
- He suffered two torturous months in the hospital's burn unit, while undergoing numerous operations on his eyes.
- When his right eye ruptured from the burns, John had to have a corneal transplant in his right eye that required 24 stitches. Twelve hours later, it ruptured again and he received 24 more stitches in the eye.
- He has had 60 procedures performed on his right eye over the past 20 years.

- John said that things that happened in the hospital and to him caused he and his wife to go their separate ways. “My fault more than anything, but sometimes that’s what happens,” he added.

### **CONTRIBUTING FACTORS & SAFETY LESSONS**

- A review of the contributing factors to this incident will help us recognize and avoid similar events in our own workplace.
- John was looking forward to getting back to the beach, so much so that he may have let it affect his decision-making process. Don’t allow off-job distractions to impact your safety decisions.
- From day one, John and others were allowed to commit unsafe acts. Even though it was well known who the risk takers were, their actions were allowed and even encouraged. For a true safety culture to develop, co-workers and supervisors must be willing to speak up about and put a stop to unsafe behaviors.
- Production pressures contributed to a decision to push through a new procedure with poor planning and poor communication. Even in an emergency, safety must be part of any procedure or action plan.
- John and Harry didn’t follow even the most basic steps of a proper lockout/tagout program. They didn’t use two locks on the disconnect; they didn’t test the disconnect to verify it was the correct one; they didn’t verify the up-line valve was closed and secured.
- John and Harry were working without protective equipment for the job they were performing. Had they been wearing the chemical suits, gloves and face shields required for the job, their injuries would have been minimized. As John and Harry discovered, protective equipment offers no protection when it is not used.

### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

- When it is all said and done, maintaining our safety and that of our co-workers is all about our attitudes, behaviors and choices. We must recognize that the choices we make each day can have a huge impact on ourselves and others.
- This is why John Martin feels it is so important to share his story with others, so people will truly understand the impact of their choices and decisions—and it’s making a difference.
- Since John began sharing his story, people at the mill have been wearing their PPE without anyone having to tell them to do so.
- If someone is teased taking a stand on a job or situation that isn’t safe, it’s just not tolerated.
- Anyone who worked with Marion after the incident knew that if he saw something he felt “wasn’t right,” he would voice his opinion whether he was working that particular job or not.
- “If you don’t feel right about something, don’t give in. Stand your ground; look the job over; do whatever it takes to make sure that it’s safe. The consequences aren’t worth it,” said Harry.
- “Now we can see our mistakes and we’re going to tell it everywhere we go that you’ve got to be safe,” Marion concluded.

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**ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ**

1. a

2. b

3. b

4. h

5. a

6. b

7. b

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**REVIEW QUIZ**

*The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. John Martin was a young mechanic known to take shortcuts to get the job done.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
2. It's okay for some workers to take shortcuts and ignore safety procedures, as long as most people follow the rules.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
3. John made sure they took the time to visually inspect the valve to verify it had been secured.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. Which of the following contributed to John's incident and injuries?
  - a. Off-job distractions affected his decision-making process
  - b. John and his co-workers were routinely allowed to commit unsafe acts
  - c. Production pressures
  - d. Poor planning
  - e. Poor communication
  - f. Improper lockout/tagout procedures
  - g. Lack of PPE
  - h. All of the above
  
5. For a true safety culture to develop, co-workers and supervisors must be willing to speak up about, and put a stop to, unsafe behaviors.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
6. What saying did John and Marion use to describe the actions of their co-workers who took the time to be safe?
  - a. Dragging the job out
  - b. Bogging the job down
  - c. Holding up progress
  
7. John wasn't aware of the extent of his injuries until the doctor at the hospital explained them to him.
  - a. True
  - b. False