

## THE DAY THE FUNNEL CLOUD CAME TO TOWN

By John F. Hall

Today is the first day of June, 2024. We lost electricity around nine o'clock in the morning, on May 26 when a severe thunderstorm hit Trigg County. The outage lasted until 1:15 AM May 29. The only reason that the outage lasted that long is because the linemen, after they repaired the outage at nine o'clock in the evening, on May 26th, failed to turn the breaker to the transformer back on. The same thing happened to my great nephew, Corey Harrison. He lives about 600 feet from my house. He is hearing impaired. His wife, Michele cannot hear or speak. They have three children, Katie age 10, Lilly age 8, and Jonah age 2. Their house is wired for the deaf, but it does not work without electricity. Trigg County had over 1,000 people lose power from that storm. On May 28, I drove to the Pennyrile Rural Electric office in Cadiz.



I arrived at 12:00 PM. The office was closed until 1:00 PM for lunch. I walked around to the drive up window where customers can pay for their bills. I asked if I could speak to the office manager. The person behind the glass looked like a teenager. She did not have on a name tag, and she did not tell me her name. I unintentionally set into motion what would turn into a perfect storm. I said: "You are the prettiest manager that I have ever seen." I guess she thought that I was being disrespectful. I showed her a picture that I taken with my cell phone. It showed an open breaker leading to the transformer. She looked at the picture, and I got this feeling that she did not have a clue what she was looking at.

I told the office manager about the Michelle Harrison, being unable to hear or speak. And that it would only take one lineman, with an expandable pole, to close the breaker. The task would only take five minutes to restore power to my house, and five minutes to restore the power to the Harrison's house. I had not shaved in several days. I had on sweat pants, a wrinkled shirt, and a dirty, white Stetson hat. I guess she might have thought that I was a dirty old man, just a nobody, not really worth her time. I appealed to her compassion, for the sake of Michelle and her three young children, to just send somebody to turn the breaker on. I thought she might say: "I'll have someone close the breakers, when they are going out that way." Instead, she got a pad and pen and asked me for my address. I gave her the requested information. Then she said, "I will fill out another outage report for you." I told her that I did not want another outage report, because I checked with Pennyrile Electric, and was told that the outage was repaired. I reiterated that I just need someone to close the breakers to the transformers going to my house and the Harrison's house. I said the task would not take more than ten minutes. My back brace, that I had to wear, from my spine surgery in April, was killing me, so I left the office and drove home.

I came home and took off my back brace. Laying down is the only way for me to relieve the pain. After resting for an hour, I realize that the office manager had retaliated against

me. I guess that she might have thought, that I was just a crippled old man, because I have to use a cane when I walk, to maintain my balance, that I was also stupid.

I was having trouble breathing that day. My voice was weak. I put on a fresh shirt, combed my hair, and drove back to Cadiz to talk to the office manager for the second time. I hobbled into office and said to the office manager: "Lets start over." I took my driver's license, my retired State Police ID, and my retired Military ID out of my wallet. I passed them under the counter for her to see. She did not look at them, and she was not impressed that this almost 79 year old man was a has been. But it is better to be a has been, than a never has been. I told her that I did not want that outage report, that she filled out, Because it was fraudulent. It would put my family and the Harrison family last to be looked at. That would be a week or two. I guess that she was being spiteful that an old man would challenge her authority.

She told me that she was 29 years old, and that she has been, the office manager for the past three years. I guess that she had no clue as to what Inspector Generals do. They investigate waste, fraud, and abuse. I ask her for some information that I knew she had. Rather than tell the truth, she lied and said that she could not access it. Once again, I appealed to see if she had any compassion for the Harrison's three children being needlessly without electricity. I asked again if she would just send someone to close the breakers, to allow the transformer to energize, and send power to two houses. She ignored my request. I chalked it up to her being inexperienced, immature, and condescending. I hobbled my way out of that office. Eleven hours later, at 1: 15 AM, a Pennyrile Rural Electric service truck was dispatched to close the breakers. It took five minutes at each house to complete the task.

On May 29, around ten o'clock in the morning, I decided, to write an after action report about what had happened. The problem that I had is that I did not know the name of the service manager. I could drive back to town, and pull up to the drive thru and ask. But that might cause the office manager to delete certain information. I called my niece, Clarissa King. She is the wife of Todd King, the mayor of Cadiz. As soon as she picked up the phone, she said: "I heard that the Cadiz Pennyrile Electric office manager does not want to turn on Corey's power." Corey Harrison is her nephew. I asked if she knew the name of the Pennyrile Electric Cadiz office manager. She said that she did not know her name, but she told me the name of the supervisor over that office.

These are a few lessons for the young adults reading this story. Never judge a person by the clothes they are wearing. Never assume that an old person is a nobody because they are not clean shaving, wearing old clothes, and an old hat. Never abuse your authority in a job that puts you over other people. Never be condescending, arrogant, disrespectful, and dismissive, because you think you can get away with it. Never assume that that if you mistreat people, that you will not be found out. Always be kind and compassionate. Being mean and. spiteful will bite you back every time. Rather than being courteous, helpful, and polite, the office manager dismissed this frail, old man as just someone not worthy of being helped. I truly believe that I had not gone back to speak to the office manager, for the second time, that my power and Corey' power would still be off.

This old, frail, insignificant, former IG, just mailed an unsolicited. Member's Power Restoration Report, to the office manager's supervisor, for his review. One final lesson, It never seems to fail, that if you abuse your authority over people, they will find a way to reciprocate. If only the office manager would have followed Christ's command: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another." (John 13:34) My Report to the office manager's supervisor will be insignificant compared to the what the Kings will tell him.

I was in the church, Sunday morning on May 26, 2024. I asked my fellow ushers, Thomas Rea and Teresa Gent, to close the window blinds in the entrance room to the church. I felt that if the wind blew out the glass, the blinds might slow down the broken glass. A visitor was standing next to the front doors with me. He showed me the radar picture on his cellphone. Then the visitor walked over to one of the windows and raised the blind. He called me over and asked me to look out the window. He pointed and said: "That is a funnel cloud!" I looked in horror as it was spinning and, about four houses away from the church. The church has no basement. I knew that if the funnel cloud makes contact with the ground, it could produce a tornado. Warnings came over the visitor's cellphone: "A tornado has been spotted in you area. Take shelter immediately!" Our Pastor, Rev Gregory Trawick, led the congregation in prayer. Then very strong winds and rains raced across the church parking lot, at over 50 miles per hour. It was so thick, that it almost made the cars seem to disappear in a wall of water. It got very dark out and I was standing by the double church doors. An odd thing happened. I was holding onto the door's push bar. The funnel cloud was changing the outside air pressure and trying to suck out the inside church air. I looked in disbelief, as the difference in air pressure was trying to push out the church doors. The church door's hinges and the doors were being pulled out. I was holding on for dear life with both hands on the push bar. I said, a prayer: "Christ, please let it go around." The lights went out in the church. Just as soon as it started, it stopped. We had a lot of prayers answered that Sunday morning, when the funnel cloud came to town.

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