

Note the date of this article, cancer clusters from power lines but the most important part is that the EPA, in 1990, was going to classify EMF's (that OHA found no problem with) a Probable Human Carcinogen. The EPA lost its funding and all was buried. Is this what we want for our children?

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## **CALAMITY ON MEADOW STREET**

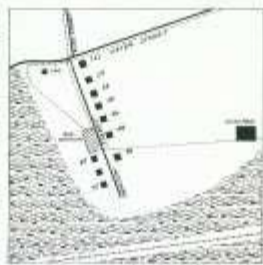
By [Paul Brodeur](#)

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# ANNALS OF RADIATION CALAMITY ON MEADOW STREET

On a Friday evening in mid-January of this year, Edna and Robert Hermsack received a call at their home, in Guilford, Connecticut—a man on Long Island Sound. Their names were on New Haven—from their friends, Lorenz and Fred Nelson, who also live in Guilford. Edna Hermsack, a structure engineer in her middle forties, who is Robert's second wife, works as an office manager for a manufacturing firm. Robert Hermsack, a radiologist, forty-two-year-old was at first skeptical, in a low-floor residence for radiology design and production development. Lorenz Nelson, a doctor, neither woman in her early forties, works at a nearby electronics plant, and Fred Nelson, an affable, wiry, gray-haired man of fifty-two, is an electrical technician. The two couples had become acquainted a year or so earlier. Lorenz Nelson's twenty-year-old daughter, Joyce, and Charles Hermsack, Robert's twenty-year-old son by his first marriage, who had been living together in the Nelsons' home, on Meadow Street, learned that Joyce was pregnant. This announcement came several weeks after of respective pregnancies, because in 1982 Joyce, who is called Miley by her family and friends, had been found to be suffering from the extremely rare condition of phocomelia, a form of disease of the limbic apparatus, which resulted in her being thirty-five percent of the length of both forearms—no feet, no hands, and no fingers. The condition also caused a severe loss of the outer skin around her face, neck, chest, and abdomen. Because of her living conditions, Joyce now usually remains indoors during her pregnancy by physicians at Yale University's School of Medicine; they did not expect her to be able to carry the baby for more than six months. Typically, however, Joyce could not help for a full nine-month term, and gave birth on October 23, 1979, to a healthy seven-pound-three-



ounce girl, Miley at the Hermsacks' home only thirty-three months later. Lorenz Nelson made a mark on the map marking an hour half that date as his grandparents, considering the fact that Joyce's Miley almost had passed her pregnancy. The child, "I'm considering all the other Edna's daughter of Meadow Street," which caused his Hermsack to sit up and take notice. "That was the first time I heard anything about a lot of Edna on Meadow Street," Hermsack said. "Edna and I had visited the Nelsons on several occasions while Miley was pregnant, and we had met that neighbor Suzanne Bullock, whose seventeen-year-old daughter, Melissa, had been operated on for brain cancer earlier that year, but neither of us knew when any other unusual incidents of disease down there. So I asked Lorenz when she moved, and she proceeded to tell Edna and me a story that we found astounding and disturbing."

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behind it. He looked up "topknot" in the Merriam-Webster and learned that was a Miley disease of certain children, one of which could be associated with exposure to mercury salts. This was a hell with joy, because he thought he had not seen these children since they were often treated with mercury. He then looked up "neurotoxic" in an electroencephalogram, textbook and learned that they are used in a variety of ways to suppress epileptic seizures. "First thing Monday morning, I called up the Connecticut Light & Power Company, in New Haven," he recalls. "I asked for maintenance services and was through four or five people until I got a lady who was some kind of supervisor in the maintenance or electrical department. I told her I was asking about a health problem on Meadow Street in Guilford. I told her there had been a lot of brain cancer cases, and I asked her if she knew about it and if it might be connected with the company's activities. 'Absolutely not,' she said. 'There have been no electrical health studies that don't prove any correlation whatsoever between electro-magnetic fields and illnesses.' She went on to say that you could get some exposure to electromagnetic fields from a source or a collaborator that from substances as power lines. I thought it was very strange how quickly she had brought up the subject of electromagnetic fields, only to deny that they could be a hazard. At that point, I knew almost nothing about electromagnetic fields, and I had certainly never heard that they might be connected with illnesses—how dare she was offering me in this position. I was at the moment not that a little bit of a fool. I told her I was shocked that she had given me such a quick answer. I told I was calling about a health problem and was looking for an answer, not rhetoric. What then, she got kind of huffy. 'Well, I'm sorry you feel that way,' she replied. 'I'm just telling you what our studies have shown.' This got my back up. I said for I was going to research the problem and find out the answer on my own. I said that to take down my nerves. 'Yes, Bob Hermsack,' I said, but you're not going to forget it."

That afternoon, Hermsack went to the library in Guilford and, with the help of a computer index, spent an hour or so looking up references to electromagnetic fields. He then went to the

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ANNALS OF RADIATION about cancer & power lines. Writer tells about an extraordinary number of cancer cases & other illnesses among residents of Meadow St. in Guilford, Conn. The trouble may have been caused by an electric substation on the street but Connecticut Light & Power Co. said there was no proof of this. Next writer tells about a cluster of brain-tumor cases in Rowan County, near Salisbury, N.C. The largest number were near the Duke Power Company's Buck Steam Plant. Again inaction was the result of these revelations. Next writer tells about cancer among children in Montecito, CA. An investigation revealed electrical installations around the Montecito Union School but there was no conclusive evidence of a health hazard so nothing was done. A number of schools in the Fountain Valley School District in Southern Calif. were built near high-current feeder lines & there were several cases of cancer but no action was taken. Tells about the numerous studies that show workers exposed to electromagnetic fields develop cancer at a higher rate than unexposed workers. During the past year the EPA has been swamped with requests from the public for information about electromagnetic fields & in May it released preliminary information about a draft report prepared by its office of Health & Environmental Assessment, which acknowledges the existence of a possible link bet. cancer & power lines. What EPA director Wm. Farland did not tell the press was that his own staff had recommended in the initial draft report that ELF electromagnetic fields be classified as "probable human carcinogens" & this was deleted from the summary of the EPA report.