

HISTORY

WHAT WENT WRONG V

6 x 52' (ENG, GER, SPA)

Season 5 of this popular long-running, adrenaline-fueled series dives deep into six recent catastrophes, including deadly maritime disasters, engineering failures, and climate-related tragedies.

From the sinking of the high-profile Bayesian yacht, the Titan submersible implosion to the Baltimore bridge collapse and a migrant boat disaster that may reshape rescue protocols, each event exposes critical safety lapses. The series also examines a fatal tower block fire in Spain linked to flammable cladding and devastating floods across Europe, highlighting the growing risks of climate change. Each disaster is retold through survivors and first responders, as well as engineering experts who help make sense of the machines that went mad: high tech infallible constructions that suffered catastrophic failure through engineering errors that were wholly preventable.



Original Title:	Menschliches Versagen V
Year:	2025
Produced by:	Millstream Films and Media
Partners:	Spiegel Geschichte

1. Titan Submarine Implosion

The story of the 2023 implosion of the Titan mini submersible created and operated by the American underwater-tourism company OceanGate. The Titan was the world's first privately-owned submersible and was transporting paying customers to the wreck of the Titanic, but during its first 2023 expedition imploded, killing all five occupants, including a father and son, a British businessman, a Titanic expert deep diver and OceanGate founder Stockton Rush, who was at the helm. A massive international search and rescue operation ended when debris from the titanium and carbon fiber composite sub was found some 500 metres from the bow of the Titanic.

2. Bayesian Super Yacht Sinking

On August 18, 2024, a superyacht with one of the the highest aluminum masts in the world sank in a freak storm off the coast of Porticello, Sicily. Seven people died trapped below deck, including British tech mogul Mike Lynch and his teenage daughter, Hannah and two other couples on a celebratory cruise. Design flaws and possible fatal mistakes by the crew are part of an ongoing investigation of how this supposedly “unsinkable” vessel with its high-profile passengers sunk to 160 feet at the bottom of the Mediterranean in just minutes.

3. Pylos Migrant Boat

The sinking of the Adriana migrant boat on June 14, 2023, in Greece near Pylos was one of the worst shipwrecks in the last decade in Europe, yet a shameful silence surrounds the incident, in which more than 500 people are suspected to have died, including 100 children trapped in the hold. Just 82 bodies were recovered. And only 104 survived – many of whom said the Greek Coast Guard was attempting a dangerous tow of the overcrowded and rickety vessel when it overturned.

4. Valencia Tower Fire

On February 22, 2024, a fire broke out in a 14-story luxury residential complex in Valencia, Spain. Strong winds, flammable building materials, and a stack effect led to the complete destruction of the 138-apartment tower block. Amazingly, only 10 people died, though the fire's dynamics closely mirrors the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire in London, where 70 people died. Both buildings, and many others like them, were covered in aluminium composite cladding, consisting of a layer of plastic sandwiched between two aluminium sheets. It is the plastic layer – usually made of polyethylene, that is the main culprit due to its combustibility ratio, but aluminium traps heat, and the cavities behind where the cladding is secured create air chimneys for fire to spread. Cladding is often installed on large tower blocks to make them more energy efficient, protect them from rain, or improve their look, but how much of this cladding is unsafe? This episode delves into the science behind this little-known public danger.

5. Europe's Deadly Floods

In 2021, at least 185 people died in heavy flooding in Germany, and in 2024 more than 200 died in devastating flash floods that hit eastern Spain in the Valencia region, where a year's worth of rain fell in eight hours. They are Europe's worst storm-related disasters in over five decades, but meteorologists warn that human-caused climate change is making such extreme weather events more common and more deadly.

6. Baltimore Bridge Collapse

On March 26, 2024, the Dali container ship lost power as it pulled out of the port in Baltimore, before striking the Francis Scott Key bridge, which collapsed and plunged into the water, killing six people working on the bridge. The ship was shown to have serious problems and bad fixes that caused malfunctions in the propeller, rudder, anchor, and bow thruster as the crew struggled, and ultimately failed, to avoid disaster. It was, essentially, unseaworthy, yet carrying 4,700 containers en route to Sri Lanka. The stricken ship and the fallen bridge blocked the channel and severed a transportation artery, bringing maritime business at one of the nation's busiest ports to a halt. It is a landmark case that may change maritime shipping safety standards forever.