

From: Wall, Dave  
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To: Cowie, Jim; Robinson, Steve W (Alaska); Corser, Kent  
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Jim, Steve, Kent,

Some information that I have extracted from a news article on Yahoo, it seems to align with what we have learnt so far. I'll add it to our time-line as 3rd party "below the line" information.

Dave

Crane operator Micah Sandell, 40, of Leesville, La., was in the cab 30 feet off the deck when he saw the water and mud shoot up and out of the derrick. He knew immediately it was a blowout, and he got on the radio to tell the crew to move to the front of the rig.

When the gushing stopped after a few minutes, Sandell took a deep breath.

"Oh, good," he said to himself. "They got it under control."

Suddenly, vapor and spray began shooting out of a goosenecked pipe on the starboard side of the deck, followed by thick, black smoke. Sandell quickly shut off his air conditioner to avoid sucking any noxious fumes into the cab.

Then something exploded.

Sandell was knocked to the floor, and fire engulfed the cabin. Certain he was about to die, the devout Baptist clapped his hands over his head and cried, "Oh, God. No."

But after a few seconds, he stood up and realized the fireball had passed him over. He made it halfway down the stairs before another blast occurred, throwing him 15 feet to the steel deck.

He got up again and ran, feeling his way along the deck rail around the port side toward the lifeboats

On the Deepwater Horizon, deck pusher Bill Johnson, supervising operations on the deck, worked his way across the rig, acrid smoke burning his lungs. He ushered two members of his crew into a lifeboat and shoved off, but there was one man missing.

Crane operator Aaron Dale Burkeen of Philadelphia, Miss., had relieved Sandell for dinner. The starboard crane had been down. He finished changing out the cable and began making up for the lost time.

The 37-year-old father of two had just recently received his 10-year certificate from Transocean, the rig's owner (BP was its operator). April 20 was his and wife Rhonda's eighth wedding anniversary; his birthday was four days away.

When the first concussion hit, he began the process of lowering his crane's 150-foot boom into its cradle and locking it down. He got it to about a 30-degree angle when he decided to make a run for it. He was about halfway down the spiral staircase when a massive explosion occurred. Johnson — who was not just Burkeen's direct supervisor, but also one of his best friends — watched helplessly from the rocking boat as the whole starboard side of the rig erupted in a cloud of smoke and flame.

Oleander Benton was chatting with a friend in the laundry when the lights went out. The other woman had just gotten up to find a maintenance person when the deep-sea oil rig shook with an ear-shattering "BANG," followed by a long, loud "hisssss."



Benton's safety training kicked in. The cook hit the floor as ceiling tiles and light fixtures came crashing down on her head and back. The concussion had blown a door off its hinges and pinned her friend to the floor.

"My leg! My leg!" the woman screamed.

Benton rose to her feet, and stepped over the debris, but she couldn't move the door. She told her friend to lie flat and slide herself out, and the two made their way into the darkened hallway,

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