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9-3-2010

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Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Newsroom: USA Today Cites Farady on Oil Rig Explosion" (2010). *Life of the Law School (1993-)*. 67.
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Newsroom

USA Today Cites Farady on Oil Rig Explosion

USA TODAY cites Susan Farady of RWU Law's Marine Affairs Institute on the explosion of another oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, in its Labor Day Weekend edition.

USA TODAY interviewed RWU Law's **Susan Farady**, Director of the Marine Law Institute and the Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program, for a story, "[Gulf platform explodes in flames; 13 rescued](#)," by Alan Levin and Julie Schmit, which ran in (and was teased on the front page of) the newspaper's special Labor Day Weekend edition:

September 3, 2010: An offshore oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico that exploded Thursday did not leak a significant amount of oil into the water, the Coast Guard said.

All 13 rig workers donned bright orange survival gear — known as "Gumby suits" — and scrambled into the Gulf after the explosion. They were rescued by a supply ship, Coast Guard Capt. Peter Troedsson said. None were seriously injured.

The owner of the oil and gas platform, Mariner Energy of Houston, reported that a mile-long slick was visible on the water near the rig. When the Coast Guard reached the scene a short time later, there was no evidence of any leaks, Troedsson said.

"The boats and the aircraft on scene cannot see a sheen," he said.

The outcome of the explosion was very different from the April 20 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon rig 200 miles to the east. That well, owned by oil company BP, spewed crude oil and natural gas for nearly

three months in the worst offshore environmental disaster in U.S. history. About 206 million gallons of oil polluted the Gulf.

The Vermilion Oil Rig 380 that exploded Thursday sat in 340 feet of water and was approved to collect oil and gas from existing wells, according to the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement. It was undergoing maintenance and was not producing at the time of the accident.

By contrast, the Deepwater Horizon was operating in more than 5,000 feet of water and was drilling into extremely deep reservoirs under high pressure.

Thursday's explosion was reported at 9:19 a.m. by a nearby rig, Troedsson said. The blast occurred 92 miles south of Vermilion Bay, La., west of New Orleans and the Mississippi River Delta.

Dan Shaw, the captain of the Crystal Clear supply boat that rescued Vermilion's workers, said the employees huddled together in the water, holding hands. They were hungry and tired after floating for two hours, he said.

Mariner Energy describes itself on its website as "one of the leading independent oil and gas exploration and production companies in the Gulf." The company was involved in 13 accidents in the region since 2006 and was fined \$85,000, according to federal records. In seven of the incidents, inspectors cited possible safety violations.

Thursday's explosion prompted swift reactions from environmentalists.

"This is one other piece of evidence that demonstrates the human and environment risks of our appetite for offshore oil," said **Susan Farady, director of the Marine Affairs Institute at Roger Williams University School of Law in Rhode Island**. She said there have been more than 800 offshore explosions and fires in the Gulf since 2001 and 55 deaths.

Meanwhile, workers took another step Thursday toward permanently plugging BP's well. They prepared to remove the well's giant blowout preventer from the seafloor as soon as Thursday night, said retired admiral Thad Allen, head of the federal government's response.

For full story, click [here](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-09-02-oil-rig-explosion_N.htm?csp=hf&loc=interstitialskip). [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-09-02-oil-rig-explosion_N.htm?csp=hf&loc=interstitialskip]