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## Miss. men among 11 missing after oil rig explosion

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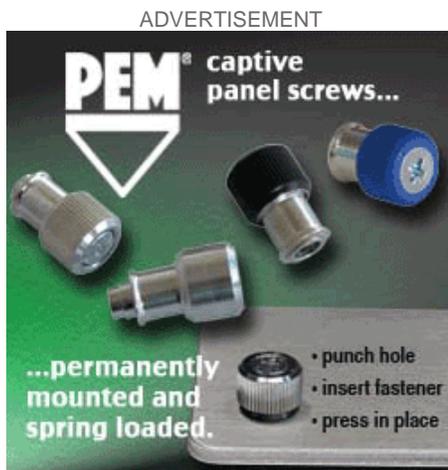
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At least four Mississippi men were among 11 workers missing after an oil rig explosion off the Louisiana coast.

The Coast Guard continued its search by sea and air Thursday as anxious families huddled around telephones awaiting hourly updates from authorities.

"We're all just sitting around waiting for the phone to ring and hoping for good news. And praying about it," said 23-year-old Andrea Cochran, whose father, Dewey Revette, was among the missing.

Revette, a 48-year-old from Wayne County in southeast Mississippi, worked as a driller on the rig and has been with rig owner Transocean Ltd. for 29 years.



Several people from Wayne County, near the Alabama line, were on the rig. Like much of Mississippi, Wayne County is a rural area with few high-paying jobs, so many of the men there head for the oil fields to support their families.

A lawyer for the family of Karl Kleppinger Jr., of Natchez, said the men may not have survived the accident.

"We've heard they are presumed not to be alive, but we don't know that for sure," said Todd Elias, a Houston attorney with the firm of Gordon, Elias and Seely, specializing in maritime law.

Elias filed a lawsuit Thursday in state court in Houston, Texas, on behalf of Tracy Kleppinger and Aaron Kleppinger, the man's wife and son. The lawsuit alleges negligence and also claims that the vessel was not seaworthy.

The companies declined comment on litigation.

The family of another missing man, Shane Roshto of Liberty, also filed a lawsuit Thursday, saying he was missing and feared dead. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach his family were unsuccessful.

Rhonda Burkeen said her husband, 37-year-old Aaron Dale Burkeen from the Sandtown community near Philadelphia, was also missing after Tuesday's rig explosion about 50 miles off the coast in the Gulf of Mexico. Rhonda Burkeen said her husband is a crane operator and a father of two.

Seventeen people were injured in the blast.

The rig was under contract to oil giant BP and was doing exploratory drilling.

A total of 126 workers were aboard. Most escaped safely.

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