



Bradley Manning tried to save the eleven men who died – burned alive – on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in 2010. But Barack Obama and the New York Times made sure that wouldn't happen. Three years ago this month, on the 20th of April, 2010, the BP Deepwater Horizon drilling rig blew itself to kingdom come.

Soon thereafter, a message came in to our office's chief of investigations, Ms Badpenny, from a person I dare not name, who was floating somewhere in the Caspian Sea along the coast of Baku, Central Asia.

The source was in mortal fear he'd be identified – and with good reason. Once we agreed on a safe method of communication, he revealed this: 17 months before BP's Deepwater Horizon blew out and exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, another BP rig suffered an identical blow-out in the Caspian Sea.

Crucially, both the Gulf and Caspian Sea blow-outs had the same identical cause: the failure of the cement "plug". To prevent blow-outs, drilled wells must be capped with cement. BP insisted on lacing its cement with nitrogen gas – the same stuff used in laughing gas – because it speeds up drying.

Time is money, and mixing some nitrogen gas into the cement saves a lot of money.

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