

June 17, 2010 MSNBC Countdown With Keith Olbermann

Partial Transcript Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill

“...OLBERMANN: But during question time by the U.S. House panel, BP Hayward came off much like the Gulf spill itself, elusive and highly frustrating. Mr. Hayward utterly failed to explain the rationale behind key decisions which probably led to the Deepwater Horizon explosion, including whether such decisions were made to save time and money. Hayward didn't remember or didn't know, or he didn't have a personal involvement in key decisions, he said.

Let's bring in as promised, Kenneth Abbott, former project control supervisor contracted by BP. Mr. Abbott has filed a lawsuit demanding the government shut down another BP oil platform in the Gulf which risking yet another catastrophe in the area. Mr. Abbott was laid off shortly after he raised his concerns with BP management. You see him here accompanied by his attorney, David Perry.

Gentlemen, thanks for your time tonight.

DAVID PERRY, KENNETH ABBOTT'S LAWYER: Glad to be here.

KENNETH ABBOTT, FORMER BP EMPLOYEE: Glad to be here, Keith.

OLBERMANN: Mr. Abbott, is there another risky BP operation out there that we should know about?

ABBOTT: Yes, there is. I was control supervisor for the Atlantis platform, which is about 80 miles south of the Deepwater. And what I found was that BP is not completing their engineering. And this is something I've never seen on any other, you know, major company I've worked for, engineering and owner companies.

And because of that, they've created a very dangerous situation, dangerous for the operators because, you know, they don't have the latest information to shut down the rig in an emergency and very dangerous for the whole Gulf. It's a time bomb waiting to explode.

OLBERMANN: This comment that was in the original testimony that Mr. Hayward submitted that then did not get said today. “The truth, however, is that this is a complex accident caused by an

unprecedented combination of failures.” What part of that statement do you disagree with, if you do indeed disagree with it?

ABBOTT: Well, you know, I can speak to what I know about it, what happened on Atlantis and the tremendous problem with drawings not being reviewed and completed by BP engineers and management taking shortcuts and setting the tone for that to happen. And all I can say is, I’ve seen several similarities on the BP rig, the Explorer.

And I think that there are similar problems with drawings not being completed. There are several examples we’ve all heard that you’ve announced in some cases. And I think they have the same problem there and quite possibly on other rigs. And the MMS is not looking into those drawings.

OLBERMANN: Today, what Mr. Hayward did say—he was, in fact, asked about you. Of course, he was asked about many things. But for you listening to this, what stood out? What was the most important information that maybe the rest of us missed?

ABBOTT: About Tony’s comments?

OLBERMANN: Correct.

ABBOTT: Well, the thing that struck me the most is that, you know, Tony is still denying that there is a problem on the Atlantis. He’s denying that there was ever any problem with the drawings. They were the right the day the rig started up and they’re still right.

And, you know, the truth is, Keith, that his own—other employees, other than me, Barry Duff, for one, had said unequivocally and in writing, there are engineering—engineering is not complete. It could result in catastrophic error—operator errors, which is what we’ve seen on Deepwater.

And his own federal judge, Judge Sporkin, who’s the head of his ombuds office has said in a letter and in a press release to the “A.P.” that he did a complete investigation, which is he is supposed to do, because I complained to him about the problem. And he came back and said: you’re right. The drawings are not done. They weren’t done when the units started up and they still aren’t done.

And if Tony wants to ignore that and use his own better answer, that’s his decision. But I’m really kind of sorry that that’s the approach he’s taken.

OLBERMANN: So, let me—let me guess and I don't want to put words in your mouth here. But if they actually put this rig into the situation that it wound up being with in, and did not have any kind of long-term or worse-case scenario to solve it other than the ways we're seeing right now, that kind of lack of planning for worse-case scenarios might, in fact, be true you at other BP facilities?

ABBOTT: Well, I know that the problem I saw at the BP Atlantis on incomplete engineering appears to have happened on the Deepwater. And I know—I have some evidence that shows it happened on the Thunder Horse.

And, you know, I think the first thing the government and the MMS should do, Keith, is go in there and check those drawings and find out if it's—if they did a final design and if it's a correct design.

OLBERMANN: Hard to believe it hasn't happened already.

Former BP project control supervisor, Ken Abbott—thank you for coming forward. Thank you for spending some of your time with us tonight.

ABBOTT: You're very welcome, Keith..."

The Tea Party

"...OLBERMANN: Well, we all got a big laugh out of Dick Armey mangling my name last night and suggesting I was rooting America in the U.S./USSR Olympic hockey "Miracle on Ice."

But then it hit me, the son of a gun said, tea party candidates should not identify themselves as tea party candidates if they want to get elected. That might be the second most interesting political story of the week. Dave Weigel joins me for it—ahead.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

OLBERMANN: Be very, very quiet. Tea partiers advised by their mastermind not to tell anybody that they are tea partiers.

First the Tweet of the Day which might represent all that is wrong with our nation at the moment, in a debate over the aftereffects of the Exxon Valdez, from otherwise unidentified Conservative Gal,

quote, "I hate to tell you this, moron, but Bill Clinton was POTUS in 1989. In fact, until 2001. Next time, get your POTUS's correct."

The corrections of her misstatement were loud, fast and hilarious.

Her answer: "You're right, I was thinking 1999. Got messed up when the poster claimed GHWBush. Thank you for correcting me."

Got messed up long before that. Still messed up, the poster who claimed George H.W. Bush was president in 1989 was, of course, messed up.

And lastly, the "I might have been wrong but I'll still insist I'm right," "If you have a problem with how the Valdez victims were handled, you need to deal with the eight years Clinton was POTUS following the crisis."

As we mentioned earlier, Steve Weinstein, GOBP..."