

## Kentucky miner buried alive, rescued after 9 hours

trapped under a 17-foot-thick rock that may

Tra-foot-thick rock that may have weighed hundreds of tons in a mine only 23 inches high.

\*\*By Roger Alford\*\*

Associated Press

\*\*WILLIAMSBURG, Ky.\*\*

A Kentucky coal miner who spent more than nine hours buried alive before being freed Wednessed ay morning said he spent most of the time praying and thinking about his family.

"I thought I was a goner."

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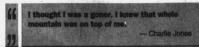
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Jones, 41, was part of a four-man crew working for H.B. Coal ne. at Proctor Hollow in one of one region's thinnest seams of coal. The mine is only 23 inches in the process of the manager of MSHA's district office in nearby Barbourville. "We just in operation for only about a sum of the safety. This is an extremely happy ending."

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month, and extended about 100 feet into the mountain. The rock fall occurred about 30 feet into the

mine.

Miners who work with Jones helped rescue crews to free their trapped comrade.

"You just feel so helpless," said Marty Bowlin, owner of the mining company who worked alongside the other miners. "I was ecstatic, tickled to death, when we got him out of there."

Jones said he was lying on his

side in what ordinarily would be an open compartment in the 19inch-tall vehicle that's used to scoop coal off the floor of the mine and haul it to the outside. The rock covered the top of the compartment, leaving Jones literally between a rock and a hard place.

"When I come to myself, I was hollering for help." he said. "It was hurting bad. All that pressure was on me."

Jones said at one point, shivering in the cool darkness of the mine, he lost hope that the rescurers would be able to get him out. "I don't know how I maintained myself," he said. "I thought about God, my wife, my kids, everything."

Pavlovich said rescue crews

initially brought in jacks and air bags in an effort to hoist the rock off Jones, but they feared the rock might have broken and crushed the trapped miner. They then began removing rock to expose one side of the machine so they could use a cutting torch to cut away enough metal to pull Jones feet-first to freedom. Jones was released Wednesday

feet-first to freedom.

Jones was released Wednesday atternoon from the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, where he was taken for observation. He said he not only escaped without a single broken bone but that he has been unable to find a scratch anywhere on his body.

"God was sure with me," he said. "You would have had to have seen that to believe it."

## 2003 Charlie Jones rescued from mine after nine hrs



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# Coal miner rescued

The Associated Press

WILLIAMSBURG, Ky.— A coal miner trapped nine hours by a fallen rock was freed early Wednesday by rescue workers and fellow miners who carved his escape path by digging out rock and cutting through a metal vehicle with a torch.

"I thought I was a goner," Charlie Jones said from a hospital bed. "I knew that whole mountain was on top of me."

He said he survived the ordeal without a single scratch. He was released later Wednesday from the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville, where he had been taken for observation.

Jones was working on his stomach inside a small motorized vehicle that hauls coal out of the mine when a 17"I thought I was a goner. I knew that whole mountain was on top of me."

- Charlie Jones, rescued coal miner

foot-thick rock collapsed about 4 p.m. Tuesday. The weight of the rock blew out the tires and pinned him inside. Miners who work with Jones helped free their trapped comrade.

"You just feel so helpless," said Marty Bowlin, owner of the mining company who worked alongside the other miners. "I was ecstatic, tickled to death, when we got him out of there."

Jones said he was lying on his side in what ordinarily would be an open compartment in the vehicle.

Jones said at one point, shivering in the darkness of the mine, he lost hope that the rescuers would be able to get him out. "I don't know how I maintained myself," he said. "I thought about God, my wife, my kids, everything."

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