

Coal Miner Safe After Being Buried 3 Days in Cavein

RICHWOOD, W. Va. (AP) — "I could see the slate falling like big hunks of paper with black dust pouring up and I said, 'Lord, nobody can stop it but you. If you don't, I'm a goner.'"

That was William C. Richmond talking, telling how it feels to be buried alive for 74 hours in a cold, lightless coal mine of central West Virginia.

The 38-year-old coal miner, working only his eighth shift when the accident happened, rested in his hospital bed today. He was weak with exhaustion but

Dr. J. R. Glassock said he was in excellent condition otherwise.

Richmond and four other miners were working in the Donegan Coal and Coke Co.'s Donegan mine about 18 miles from here Wednesday night when a creaking noise warned of a roof fall.

Four men ran toward the main entry and safety. Richmond didn't make it. Hundreds of tons of rock and slate thundered into a nine-foot area, blocking the entry.

Richmond was trapped between the face of the coal and the fall. Nobody knew it until Saturday night, when rescue workers heard sounds from behind the fall.

Richmond's wife and seven children came over from Rupert to visit him yesterday. His wife, expecting an eighth child, said:

"If he was safe and sound, the Lord had a hand in it."

Richmond told newsmen:

"The fall came right up to two feet from me and stopped. The wall started scooting in under me. Pieces of rock kept pushing in beneath me and lifted me up until I just had a little hole about 20 inches high left to lie in.

"It was just about the size of the inside of a coffin, and I thought that was what it was going to be for me."

Richmond was without food, water or light until rescuers reached him early yesterday.

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