

HOLDER EMPHASIZES 11 DEAD WHEN DISCUSSING DOJ INVESTIGATION OF BP DISASTER

✘ While it is not news that DOJ is conducting an investigation of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, Eric Holder's speech in New Orleans about the spill reiterated that DOJ is doing so. I'm most interested in the particular emphasis Holder placed on the 11 men who died in the explosion.

There is one thing I will not let be forgotten in this incident: In addition to the extensive costs being borne by our environment and by communities along the Gulf Coast, the initial explosion and fire also took the lives of 11 rig workers. Eleven innocent lives lost. As we examine the causes of the explosion and subsequent spill, I want to assure the American people that we will not forget the price those workers paid.

True, Holder focused primarily on civil liability and named statutes that focus on fines. But he also said that Department attorneys were reviewing "other traditional criminal statutes" with regard to the accident, which might include things like negligent homicide (bma described negligent and reckless homicide, as well as other relevant statutes, in this post). (This would be particularly useful, IMO, as an HJC hearing last week made it clear that there were some limits to the support BP can be made to pay the families of those who died.)

Mind you, as always with this Administration, I'm not holding my breath. But given the mounting evidence that BP was using a negligent

well design and proceeded with attempts to close the well in spite of signs of looming disaster, I do hope DOJ gives due consideration to the deaths that such corporate negligence may have caused. Treating those 11 deaths with the seriousness it deserves may well be the only thing that might teach BP a lesson here.