

Statement of Mike West

In the summer of 2003, I was working as an area manager for Valero Energy Company with a yearly salary of \$70,000. I was a tenured employee of eight years. When I heard about a chance to earn more with Halliburton, I called them up. After just a few minutes, the woman said that I was hired as a labor foreman for the LOGCAP contract at a salary of \$130,000. I didn't even need to send in a resume.

I arrived in Houston on August 4, 2003. I waited around for a month before being sent to Kuwait. While in Houston, I learned that my actual salary would be \$82,000. This salary was based on a 12-hours a day, 7-days a week work schedule.

In early September, I arrived at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. I was there six days before being sent to Iraq. The head of human resources told us that, for days when we had no work, we should draw eight hours of standby pay. I only worked one day out of the six in Kuwait. That day, a Halliburton supervisor told me to operate a forklift. I explained that I didn't have a license to operate a forklift or any experience. The response from two supervisors was: "Keep your seat belt and hard hat on and don't say anything. It's easy and no one will know." While I was at Camp Arifjan, I saw and heard about 80-100 Halliburton truck drivers waiting for work in the morning. About five or ten would be picked to drive each day. The rest were sent back to the hotel, where they received eight hours of standby pay.

When I got to Camp Anaconda in Iraq with 15 to 20 other Halliburton employees, the company had no plan for how to put us to work. Of the 35 or so Halliburton employees at Anaconda, only a handful had anything to do. At the first nightly staff meeting, the question of pay came up because so few people had any work. The human resources supervisor said: "Don't worry. Just write down 12 hours. Walk around, look around, look busy." Halliburton's head LOGCAP official for northern Iraq, Jim Spores, was at this meeting. He didn't object to this statement. We were also told to forget everything we were told in Kuwait.

After five days at Anaconda, Jim Spores and the human resources supervisor told me and four other employees that we were going to Al Asad, near Tikrit. Halliburton drivers were told to keep the convoy together and to move non-convoy cars in front of them or next to them out of the way. On the trip to Al Asad, the truck in front of the one I was riding in ran a car with an Iraqi family of four off the road. My driver said that this was normal.

We were at Al Asad for one week. The Camp Manager there didn't understand why we came. Except for one day, all five of us had no work. We just walked around all day. At one point the Halliburton Camp Manager said that he needed to find some real work for us if he was going to keep paying us for 12 hours a day, otherwise maybe we would have to drop down to 8 hours a day. I told him I wanted to work, and I didn't want to just sit around and collect 8 hours of standby pay. He said not to worry about it and keep writing down 12 hours a day on the time sheets.

Next, I went to Fallujah for six weeks, where I kept getting full pay even though there wasn't much work to do. By the end of the six weeks, Halliburton had around ten employees in Fallajuh, but only a few had any real work to do. The warehouse had no warehouse to run. The plumber had no plumbing to work on. The HVAC mechanic had no air conditioners to fix. The heavy equipment operator had no equipment to operate. And the generator mechanic had no generators to work on.

Before our arrival at Fallujah, Halliburton hired a Jordanian company named Daoud to build the two dining facilities. Once or twice a day, I would go to the site and take a few pictures. No one else from Halliburton was supervising them and no one asked me to do anything except stop by and take pictures. And, while I was in Fallujah, they hired another company from Kuwait named Rasiat to build military housing, drill for water, and do other jobs. The only thing I could think was: "What are we doing here?"


For most of my stay in Fallajuh, the only other work I did was security duty at the front gate. Even though I didn't have any security training, they told me to check trucks for bombs. During my last week, I also spent some time in an SUV following local Iraqis around the main base and two outpost camps to make sure they emptied all the portable toilets. When Halliburton hired me as a labor foreman, never in a million years did I think they would have me following around the truck that was emptying out the port-o-johns, especially since I was told at Houston and Kuwait that I would not be leaving the base that I was assigned to.

One day, I was ordering some equipment. I asked the Camp Manager if it was okay to order a drill. He said to order four. I responded that we didn't need four. He said: "Don't worry about it. It's a cost plus plus contract." I asked him, "So basically, this is a blank check?" The Camp Manager laughed and said, "Yeah." He repeated this over and over again to the employees.

Because of my boredom and the Camp Manager's poor attitude, I quit. Even though Halliburton promised to transport me out of the country, several days went by with no action. Eventually, I just hitched a ride with a military convoy headed to Baghdad International Airport. Once I got there, I hitched another ride with the Air Force, who flew me to Kuwait.

As a Halliburton employee, I was disappointed by all of the company's lies and disorganization. As a taxpayer, I'm disgusted by all of the money spent by Halliburton to pay employees to do nothing.


Robert Michael West


Date