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## **King Coal: Out of Control (The Indydependent)**

Safety violations are ignored; more mining disasters likely in West Virginia

By ANTRIM CASKEY

The Sago mine disaster that recently took the lives of 12 men and has left one man struggling to live rocked West Virginia. It deserves our attention. Sago is only the most recent disaster in this state forgotten by most, riddled with corporate, regulatory and federal corruption that's killing coal miners who are some of the most hard-working people in the land.

Thus far, it looks like these miners at Sago were killed by the negligence of the mine's owner, International Coal Group (ICG). In 2005, ICG incurred \$24,000 in fines for 202 violations at the Sago mine but did nothing. It is cheaper for coal companies to pay the fines than to fix the dangers they create.

In Sundial, W. Va. – on the other side of the state from Sago – the Goals Coal Preparation Plant is another disaster waiting to happen. As I have reported in past editions of The Indydependent, Marsh Fork Elementary School sits directly beneath the Goals plant, which contains a coal-processing plant, a 2.8 billion-gallon coal sludge dam and coal storage silos all adjacent to the Edwight mountaintop removal site.

Like the Sago mine, Goals has been charged with “significant and substantial” violations. In 2005, the Goals plant (mine ID# 4605317) incurred 46 violations, for which the company was assessed a mere \$4,662 in fines, according to the Mine Health and Safety Administration website. The dam has been shown to be unstable and leaking. If it bursts, the results could be horrific. Do we have to wait until 233 schoolchildren drown in toxic coal sludge before something is done?

Coal mining in Appalachia is not just killing people in accidents like Sago. The coal industry, aided and abetted by the Bush administration, is also steamrolling over any potential impediment on its path of greed.

Mountaintop removal coal mining is destroying the most diverse forest ecosystem in the nation, thousands of miles of mountain streams, unique flora and fauna and the culture of a people who've lived there for generations – all for a lump of coal.

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<http://nyc.indymedia.org/en/2006/01/63264.shtml>

appalachia – spelling site:.gov appalachia 161,000 results, confirmed with *Encyclopedia Americana*

sago – site:.gov sago -->msha.gov, recent enough that I'm okay with this reference

coal industry aided and abetted by Bush administration, steamrolling impediment on path to greed  
NYPL databases, Academic Search Premier: coal, “bush administratio” profit\*

abstract of *Nation* article does it (but not coal)

adv search: all text coal-default

academic journals

sort by relevance

“From Mountaintop to Moonscape”

12 deaths and 1 injury

MSHA, Business & Company Resource Center

corporate regulatory and federal corruption

“coal industry” and corporate and regulate and corrupt\*

ASP coal corrupt\* “west virginia” (text)

“Foxes Guarding the Chicken Coop”

coal miners, labor