The morning of the 20th of June 2009 started like any other day in Blackwater. My husband John woke up and had breakfast. Got dressed and organised his things for work. He kissed me goodbye and told me he loved me. He kissed my 37 week pregnant belly and said I love you to our unborn bub and told me he'd see me in the afternoon and he walked out the door, got in his work ute and drove away. That was the last time I saw him.

John was a hard worker and loved working in the mines. He was a communication specialist for a large mining contractor and that day he was working at BMA Blackwater installing uhf radios into the larger mining vehicles. We had moved to Blackwater as a way to get ahead as we had 3 young boys and wanted to give them the best life we could. John had been working so very hard to provide for his boys and he'd been doing a bit of overtime to prepare for some time off for the birth of our next child.

He was such a hard worker and always thought that he was safer on the mine site than anywhere else and when I would voice my concerns with him working there he would always say "nothing will ever happen to me". Nowadays I think of that statement and dream of what could've been.

That day was an exciting day for us. John's parents had come to Blackwater to help us get the house ready for the arrival of bub number 4. They were helping us to paint the baby's room and they were going to stay with him in Blackwater while I came down to Brisbane to await the arrival. I left home around 9am and John called me at 9:15 to make sure everything was ok. I told him I was driving into Emerald to pick up some last minute things for the baby's room. He told me that I should be careful driving on my own and that he loved me. I got home around 1:30pm and went inside to talk to John's parents. Around 1:45pm a police car pulled up in my driveway and a female police officer walked up my front stairs. She knocked on my door and walked into my house. What she said next will be forever imbedded in my memories forever.

She looked at me and asked me if this was the house of John Barker. I said yes. She again asked if this was the home of John Barker who worked at BMA as a contractor. I said yes, and started to wonder what she was asking for. She asked if he was working at BMA today. I said yes. She then looked at my belly and asked if I was pregnant. I nodded my head. The police officer then proceeded to explain to me that my husband had been involved in an accident at the mine and that she was very sad to tell me that he didn't make it. I fell back onto the couch and simply looked at her and said "No". She then proceeded to explain the details of the accident. From that moment my world as I knew it ceased to exist. John's parents were with me at that moment. I will never forget the look on his mother and father's face when they realised that their only son had been taken from them. As a wife I had lost so much of my future, but they had lost their everything, their past, present and future.

I thought I had done some hard things in my life, but nothing will compare to having to tell my children what had happened. My 10 year old son would not believe me. He just kept saying No. No it's not real. It was so hard for him to comprehend that that morning life had been normal and then this afternoon it was anything but and would never be the same ever again. My 2 younger boys just simply didn't understand. They just kept asking when Daddy would be home. They continued to do that for 12 months after. Whenever they were upset they would lay in their rooms and call out for their Daddy. As a parent you want to provide for your child and give them what they need. But I couldn't give them the one thing they yearned for more than anything.

On the 19th March 2009, not even a month after I had buried my 33 year old husband, I gave birth without him, to another gorgeous boy who has his eyes. Another boy who reminds me of the man I married and who loved us all with all his heart. It didn't seem fair that he wasn't there to experience that moment. It isn't fair that my youngest son will never meet his father. All because of a twist of fate.

The coroner's report has never been able to give a reason for John's accident but they surmise that he simply had a micro sleep at the wheel. I know he hadn't been sleeping well and he had worked 12 out of the previous 14 days. He had a few night time call outs and had worked longer days to get some time up in lieu so he could come to Brisbane for the birth. He didn't worry about the longer hours as most men that we knew did the same things to accrue hours for holidays. It was the done thing in his eyes.

If I had a time machine, the one thing I would do, is go back to that week and make him sleep more, tell him to work less and to come home to me on that Friday and never leave me or my babies. I can't do that. Working in the mining field is a great way to help your families. It can be a wonderful experience but please make sure it's not the end of your life story. The story of John's life was an extensive one but it will always end on that day in February 2009. Go home tonight and hug your loved ones. Tell them you love them and tell them that you'll always be there for them. Please mine safety relates to everyone who enters a mine site. Safety and fatigue is serious. Don't allow your family to be put into my situation. Your life is worth so much more to not only yourself but to the rest of your family, forever.