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# Rescued crane operator: 'Yeah, I'll go back'

April 13, 1999  
 Web posted at: 11:19 a.m. EDT (1519 GMT)

[ATLANTA](#) (CNN) -- The Alabama man dramatically plucked from the top of a construction crane while fire raged below him said Tuesday he would return to work, but not until he takes "a month or so" off to recover from his ordeal.

[Ivers Sims](#), 49, was working atop the crane Monday when fire erupted on a construction site 220 feet beneath him. Sims said his first concern was for the people working on the building below. By the time he realized the fire was out of control, he said, it was too late to come down to safety. Sims was trapped.

"It was a relief when I knew someone was coming to get me," Sims said at a news conference Tuesday morning.

That someone was firefighter [Matt Moseley](#), dangling from a 50-foot rope attached to a helicopter piloted by Vietnam veteran [Boyd Clines](#), guided by navigator [Larry Rogers](#).

"We don't like to be called heroes," Moseley said on CNN Tuesday. "We had a job to do and we went out there and did it."

Moseley said he couldn't "give enough credit to" Clines, who flew the chopper through high winds and intense heat until Moseley could catch onto the metal framework of the crane. Clines, in turn, credited Rogers.

"I was just looking ahead," said Clines, who flew rescue missions during a stint in Vietnam. "He told me 'move two feet this way, or two feet up,' and I did."

Atlanta firefighters got the call about the fire at the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills about 2:35 p.m. Monday. Fueled by high winds and dry conditions, the fire quickly raged out of control, engulfing the five-

**Crane operator Sims hangs on tight as he and firefighter Moseley fly through the air**

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The Atlanta Fire Department issued a desperate call for helicopters to help rescue Sims. The call was answered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, which had assembled a helicopter rescue team three years ago. Its aircraft was rigged specifically for the type of operation needed to get the Woodland, Alabama, man off the crane.



Using hand signals, Moseley relayed what he needed to Rogers, who relayed directions to Clines. Moseley reached the end of crane, where Sims lay across concrete counterweights to escape the heat of the metal deck, 10 minutes after its gondola burst into flames. Four minutes later, Clines set the two men on solid ground.

"I wanted to walk (to the ambulance)," Sims said. "If I'd had time I would have kissed the ground."

Instead, Sims was whisked away on a stretcher to Atlanta Medical Center, where he was treated for smoke inhalation and exposure to high heat.

Asked if he intended to return to his sky-high job, Sims said, "Yeah, I'll go back."

Monday's fire damaged at least a dozen homes in the nearby

Cabbagetown neighborhood, along with the destruction of the apartment construction project at the Fulton Mills Mill No. 1. Two other apartment projects in the mill complex were not damaged.

Investigators were still trying to learn how the fire started.

*Correspondent Tom Watkins contributed to this report.*

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