

# In Katrina's Aftermath

By Holly Lisle

Combat Doc and Zette both have excellent articles on fingerpointing. Well worth reading, both of them.

The fact is, if fingers are pointing at why New Orleans is such a nightmare (Mississippi got hit harder, but is doing much better, for example), they'd better be pointing a helluva lot of places.

- **The people who chose to ride it out.** (Those who had a way out of the city and didn't take it.)
- **The third most corrupt state government in the US.** (Mississippi's is first in this dubious honor – and they're STILL doing better in their recovery efforts.)
- **Environmentalists who blocked all attempts to improve New Orleans' levee system,** because of environmental impact. (How's this for an environmental impact, you friggin' morons?)
- **A mayor who demonstrated breathtaking incompetence** in putting into action the city's existing evacuation plan. (Using those buses to get people out was ON it.)
- **The welfare system that goes back to Johnson** and his Great Society, which has systematically broken up black families, removed the black male from a central role of responsibility within the family, and that has created a whole caste of disposable men who have, in looking for value in themselves, become the gangs, posses, and in NOLAs case, looters, who are behind the crime wave that already existed in the city before the hurricane. (Men who are raised to provide for their wives and kids don't run in gangs. And street gangs, of whatever race or creed, come from the same fractured social structure driven by the same entitlement mentality.)

- **The absolute necessity that we have a city located at the nation's largest port.**
- **The media**, who missed the story for the first couple of days, showing pictures of New Orleans mostly dry, and going, "Whew, that was close."
- **The FEMA director**, who didn't get the severity of the damage. (Was he getting his information from the news?)
- **People not in the middle of this who are adding to the clutter out of ignorance or malice.** These are the people who are criticizing the National Guard in their rescue effort. How many of you understand the sheer amount of work it takes to rescue one person from one roof? Multiply this by thousands. It isn't something that CAN happen in a day. (Get helicopter. Fly helicopter to site – five minutes to half an hour, if no one is shooting at you. Then maybe ten minutes to get one terrified person securely from roof to helicopter, more if complications exist, multiplied by number of people on roof who are in **immediate** need. However long it takes to disengage from those who are not in immediate need [\*see TRIAGE] Get away from roof, continue slowly loading helicopter to capacity, fly to safe location. Return. Repeat. Throw in gunfire **at** helicopter for grins and giggles, because those things aren't dangerous enough on their own.)

*\* TRIAGE. All rescue efforts **must** use a triage system. It works like this. Those who are dead, you ignore until last. Those who are so gravely injured that that they cannot survive, you ignore until last – you have limited resources and limited time, and it is an acknowledged fact that you cannot save everyone. Those who are critical but saveable you take first. Those who can hold out longer you leave for the next team. Multiply this by a whole city, be the guy on the ground who has to go in and decide who is critical and who can wait, get shot at, try to reassure the screaming, desperate people who **AREN'T** critical that there will **be** a*

*next team. Sound like a fun job to you? No? Didn't think so. Then if you're one of those people criticizing the guys from the National Guard who are in there doing that job, the time to shut up is right now.*

Responsibility is not something you're given. It's something you take. It starts with each individual and flows outward and upward, first to community, and then to local organizations, and then to city organizations, and then to state organizations, and then to federal organizations. In any disaster, the individual is first and foremost responsible for himself and his family.

"This fact—which needs to be repeated and remembered—is that in our country, state and local governments have primary responsibility in dealing with local disasters."

New Orleans broke down at every step. Everyone should have taken responsibility. Instead, no one did.

**(NOTE: With apologies to those who posted comments.** I did not intend to leave this Rant open for comments. Doing so was an error on my part, but one I've corrected. My Rants are seriously off-topic for this weblog, which is a writing diary – I'm permitting myself the luxury of writing them, but with rare exceptions I'm not engaging in discussion about them. Trackbacks are open for those who want to make use of them to respond via their own weblogs. All comments, however well-spoken, have been deleted.)

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