

Published on August 29, 2006 by the [Associated Press](#)

Ex-FEMA Chief Blames Administration

Former FEMA Director Michael Brown, who lost his job because of Hurricane Katrina, said Tuesday his biggest regret a year later is that he wasn't candid enough about the lack of a coherent federal response plan.

"There was no plan. ... Three years ago, we should have done catastrophic planning," Brown said, charging that the Bush administration and his department head, Michael Chertoff, "would not give me the money to do that kind of planning."

As levees broke down at Katrina's strike against New Orleans and people were forced from their homes, Brown said he sought futilely to get the 82nd Airborne Division into the city quickly.



Julie Rico hods the hand of her daughter Mercedes as they walk to a school bus in St. Bernard, La., Tuesday morning Aug. 29, 2006. One year ago today Hurricane Katrina came ashore and flooded much of the area. Hurricane Katrina debris still lines the street where they live. (AP Photo/Bill Haber)

Appearing on NBC's "Today" show, he was asked about positive statements he had made at the time about how Washington would come through for the storm victims, rather than leveling with the country about how bad the situation actually was.

"Those were White House talking points," Brown replied. "And to this day, I think that was my biggest mistake."

Brown said that at many intervals during the week the storm hit, he found himself asking,

"Where in the hell is the help?"

"I have to confess ... you want to protect the president when you're a political appointee," he said, "so you're torn between telling the absolute truth and relying on those talking points. To this day, that is my biggest regret. "



Brown said he had been made the scapegoat for the government's slow response "because I'm the low man on the totem pole." He said he thought that President Bush and Chertoff, the homeland security secretary, should have shared in the blame.

He denied that he lacked qualifications to direct the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"That's just baloney. I spent more time in my career in local government and in state government and in emergency management experience," Brown said. "But what I regret the most: I let the American public down. I am a fighter ... but for some reason, with Katrina crashing in on me, I didn't do it."

©2006 The Associated Press.

###

 Printer Friendly Version  E-Mail This Article

FAIR USE NOTICE

This site contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of environmental, political, human rights, economic, democracy, scientific, and social justice issues, etc. We believe this constitutes a 'fair use' of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. For more information go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

Common Dreams [NewsCenter](#)

A non-profit news service providing breaking news & views for the progressive community.

[Home](#) | [Newswire](#) | [Contacting Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Donate](#) | [Sign-Up](#) | [Archives](#)

© Copyrighted 1997-2006
www.commondreams.org