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## **Katrina: Why aren't we talking about Criminal Negligence?**

**By Mike Wwhitney**

**03/03/06 "ICH"** -- -- "I have kind a sinking feeling in my gut right now... You know, from this tape it looks like everybody was fully aware." New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin

It is clear now that Michael Chertoff and George Bush can be directly implicated in the deaths of the 1,300 Americans who died in Hurricane Katrina. The newly released video from the Associated Press proves beyond a reasonable doubt that they were adequately warned of the gravity of the approaching storm and the risks it posed to people of New Orleans. The only question now is whether the charges should be criminal negligence or manslaughter. We leave that to the attorneys.

As the video shows ( <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article12132.htm> ) both Bush and his Homeland Security chief were told by federal disaster officials in unambiguous language "that the storm could breach levees and overwhelm rescuers".

What could be clearer than that?

Bush's comments three days later that, "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees", was obviously meant to mislead the public and redirect the blame away from himself.

For some unknown reason, Bush and his lieutenants ignored the warnings of the Hurricane experts and stubbornly refused to take timely action that would have saved lives. Even when Chertoff was notified that the levees had been breached, he failed to respond until hours later.

Why?

After all, as one official noted, "It was not only predictable; it was predicted."

Indeed, it was. But Bush and company obviously had different plans in mind.

What those plans were; no one knows, but that doesn't minimize the scale of the disaster or keep us from assigning blame. The video proves that both Bush and Chertoff are guilty of dereliction of duty and, very possibly, manslaughter.

The question now is one of "intentionality", not "culpability".

The media has played a crucial role in blocking attempts for an independent investigation and for absolving Bush of guilt. From the beginning, they singled-out ex-FEMA-chief Michael Brown as the scapegoat for the obvious failures of the administration. We know now that "Brownie" was perhaps the only high-ranking official who acted responsibly and tried to protect the public from harm. Brown repeatedly warned of the potential dangers of Katrina but no one paid attention. On the video he is heard saying, "My gut tells me...that this is a bad one and a big one...To put it mildly, this is the big one".

Brown cautioned that the Superdome was 12 ft below sea-level and could be swamped if the levees broke. He later alerted Homeland Security that, "They're not taking patients out of the hospitals, taking prisoners out of the prisons, and they're leaving hotels open in downtown New Orleans. So, I'm very concerned about that."..."I'm concerned about the medical and mortuary resources and their ability to respond to a catastrophe within a catastrophe."

He also added later, "I want to jam up supply-lines. I want to cut the bureaucratic red-tape. I want it, balls-to-the-wall, in doing everything we could."

Brown was obviously doing the best he could under the circumstances.

Unfortunately, his efforts were rewarded by a "swift-boat" media-campaign that portrayed him as a clownish-bungler who botched the relief-effort from start to finish. The media deftly shifted the blame from the White House (where it belonged) to a bit-player in the government bureaucracy who was only trying to save lives. The AP video shows where the guilt really lies.

There's no evidence that anyone else in the administration was particularly worried by the tragedy or the loss of life. Three days passed before troops were deployed to the region and the relief-effort was hampered at every turn by federal agents.

As more and more incriminating evidence has surfaced, the recalcitrant media has stuck to its narrative of a "blundering bureaucracy" unable to deal with a massive natural disaster like Katrina. All of the 2,200 articles which first appeared about the storm invoked the very same phraseology. According to the MSM, Katrina showed a "failure of imagination" or, Homeland Security was "slow to react" or, Chertoff

was in "a fog of war" or, (Bush's much repeated) "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees".

These carefully-worded phrases have built a protective wall around Bush and Chertoff; shielding them from direct involvement in the deaths of 1,300 Americans and 2,300 missing.

We may not know what Bush or Chertoff had in mind when they refused to carry out their duties, but we do know that it was not the result of a "bungling bureaucracy". That's just baloney.

The "buck-passing" media is trying to deflect blame and hoodwink the public, but the charges remain the same; criminal negligence or manslaughter.

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