

**The
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***Ready for Revolution:
A message for Barbara Bush
by Toronto Jones
Guest Commentator***

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By now everyone that reads this article has been affected in some way by the images that have been transmitted via the television in regards to the crisis in New Orleans. To some, it is an excuse to show that their particular company cares for the community. These individuals will give a large financial donation, or have a food drive right now while it is sexy, but what will they do next week? Some people view this tragedy as something the people brought on themselves, as to say God is punishing these people for not pulling up their bootstraps, and getting out of poverty. According to some, the affected party should be summoned to a life in 4-D: death, destruction, despair and displacement. Even Barbara Bush said, that it is actually better to be living (in the shelters) than how they lived before. A silver lining for “them.”

Strange that she would say that because I can't even fathom how living in a shelter, is a step up from living in their own house. I don't understand how being displaced from your family is better then being with their family in New Orleans. Finally, I don't understand how waiting on a long line for food stamps, wearing donated clothes, and not knowing if you have came into contact with malaria, cholera, or hepatitis, is better than living back in New Orleans. Barbara Bush is like the old slave master, believing that by allowing people of color some shelter, they would be thankful and like it better than their homeland.

Well, Miss Bush, since you never stayed in a shelter, allow me to share with you what an evacuee told me the other day while I was transporting him to a hotel on the outskirts of Dallas. The evacuee told me that when he was inside the superdome, that there were rapes that occurred, gang members running wild, citizens that stole guns from Wal-Mart, shots fired inside the dome, feces and urine everywhere, a suicide, elderly evacuees dying from heart attacks and exhaustion, and just plain fear and pandemonium. There was also fear (according to one of the evacuees that my wife met at the Dallas Convention Center) that someone from the government was going to open the doors of the Superdome garage and kill the people inside. This sounded very silly to me at time until I received the new Sports Illustrated (September 12, 2005) in the mail. On page 4, it shows the building surrounded by water, and also shows the garage doors that the evacuee mentioned during her story description. It took them to go through that before they got to the astrodome, where she (Barbara Bush) said is a step up from how they were living before.

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While volunteering at the Dallas Convention center, I noticed that there were all kinds of people there. But this time the storm put them all on equal footing: Blacks, Whites, Latino, Pakistani, you name it; they were all there together. Laborers, bakers and other professionals were there as well, so I am sure that it wasn't a step up for everyone. I would like Miss Bush to spend a week in a shelter to see how much a step up it is. I want her to wait in line for FEMA to give her 2000 dollars to see how far it's going to go. Speaking of which, the 2000 dollars is set up to go to the victims via direct deposit. Here's a news flash for FEMA: a lot of the people who are deemed as lower income still keep their money in a shoe box or boot, so when direct deposit is mentioned, it will sound like a foreign language.

Simply put, Miss Bush's son failed Black Louisianans. The way the administration responded to their needs in a life or death situation is probably payback for poor returns from the New Orleans area. In a red state such as Louisiana, George Bush probably thought that everyone should follow the traditional party lines. I guess the payback was no funding for the levy. Last year, the Army Corp of Engineers said that 100 million was the amount that was needed for fixing the levee. Forty million was actually approved. So, with the hurricane in the forecast, and a governor that knew that the levee was not adequately funded, she could have got the people evacuated in time. According to the Louisiana Evacuation Guide it says under the section titled Louisiana disaster plan, page 13 paragraph 5:

“The primary means of hurricane evacuation will be personal vehicles. School and municipal buses, government-owned vehicles and vehicles provided by volunteer agencies may be used to provide transportation for individuals who lack transportation and require assistance in evacuating.”

It was clear, knowing that the hurricane was predicted to be apocalyptic in nature. A storm of epic, Biblical and Quranic proportions, that she would send the lambs to slaughter by telling the people this statement on Aug 28, 2005:

“Those that can leave should leave, but those that cannot can go to the city shelters.”

She should have told them that they would be forced to evacuate the city 2–3 days prior. FEMA takes some blame in this too by not preparing the city for this doomsday scenario (as well as the office of emergency preparedness), however there is no get out of jail free card in this article for Gov Blanco. Governor Blanco, a democrat was probably looked at as someone that the people could trust. But in retrospect, they probably put their trust in someone looking after their own interest. Gov. Blanco is a former Lt. Governor who supervised the department of culture recreation and tourism. Under her leadership, the tourism industry exploded by 41 percent. This translated to 2.5 billion dollars worth of revenue generated by the tourism industry. Could it be that she purposely had a hand on downplaying the situation to purposely flush out the poor citizens of New Orleans into other parts of the country, so she can rebuild her city with federal funds, and generate interest in her city by totally remaking the image of New Orleans by luring whites back to the big easy?

Talk about masterminding a boom in real estate and tourism at the expense of black lineage that goes back to slavery. According to the Mayor of New Orleans, the Governor, in a conversation with the president, said that she needed 24 hours to make a decision in regards to getting the help that they needed to prevent future deaths. People sitting on rooftops had to wait 24 hours for the Governor to figure out what to do. Elderly people in nursing homes had to wait, as well as the people that were literally locked in the superdome with escaped prisoners. They had to wait on what the governor decided to do.

So it comes to this: we cannot wait and sit in a trance at the TV set any longer. Its time to take action now. The administration can be blamed for our Black children that have died (or have been separated from their parents) as a result of this tragedy. The same administration has caused White soldiers, who are children in the eyes of their parents, to die in the sands of Iraq, over some misleading information. And it is this

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administration that is responsible for the deaths of innocent Iraqi children, while looking for weapons of mass destruction.

It is time for every African American, and every other American that has a heart to go back and claim New Orleans. It time for every Black sports figure and entertainer to stop shucking and jiving and combine his or her resources to invest in New Orleans. Its time for every Black business to move to New Orleans to stimulate the economy and create jobs for those that lost their job. The time is now to create self-sufficiency, instead of relying on an administration that doesn't relate to Black America. I am sure if Oprah knew that it would take 100 million to repair the levee, and the government failed to do it, she would have reached in her pocket knowing what she knows now. African Americans need to buy every piece of property in New Orleans and help reunite the displaced, with some semblance of their former life. Like the days of the civil rights era, whites that are colorblind should and will be welcomed in the "New " Orleans that is on the horizon, but for those that see us as criminals, looters and convicts, as was said during a frantic time when the locals were trying to get food to feed their families. We don't need your help.

Right about now I am experiencing the John Coffey (Green Mile) syndrome, whereas I can feel the pain and suffering of all of the people affected by this catastrophe. I intend to be a part of the rebuilding process, and would start by demanding that Governor Blanco submits her letter of resignation. With Baton Rouge almost reaching a million people, it would make a great one two punch in the event that New Orleans pulls good Americans of all faiths and nationalities back to New Orleans. The two strong cities would be the launching pad to the election of a Governor that will have the interests of all the people in mind. This individual will never be hesitant when lives are at stake, and would get the people to safety in times of crisis.

For this to occur it will take a revolution: a change from the mindset that the current administration is here to help to a mindset that fosters common sense to the voting public, and rational thinking. Maybe then Louisianans will see that the current regime is self-absorbed with dreams of grandeur and excess capitalism.

After New Orleans is rebuilt, and the city is once again as vibrant as ever, I will recommend to the governor, whoever it may be that he/she needs to establish a shelter in the name of Barbara Bush, and even have a special suite in her name, furnished with a stiff green cot, and a tattered gray blanket from the Red Cross.

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