

The Battle of New Orleans

Posted by

Thursday, 01 September 2005 02:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 September 2005 02:15

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Media Channel - Danny Schechter - Goaded perhaps by looped television footage of "looting" amongst the ruins of New Orleans, overwhelmingly displaying non-white participation, police and military spokespersons say "law and order" will take precedence to rescue missions as evacuation efforts continue in the stricken city. {lex}

www.mediachannel.org

NEWS DISSECTOR

America's Shame, Bush's Disgrace Danny Schechter

Media Channel
September 1, 2005

THE NEW BATTLE FOR NEW ORLEANS THE LINK WITH IRAQ SAVE THE DATE: NYC MC EVENT--SEPTEMBER 6

No one knows how many have died. No one knows how many are sick. No one knows what happened to the Evacuation Plan. No one seems to know nuthin except what we can see..when our eyes are not tearing...

Headlines on Nola.com (The "Everything New Orleans" website) today: "CITY HITTING BOTTOM"... "Nightmare in the 9th Ward".
..."Rescuers Had to Push the Bodies Back With Sticks"... " Will New Orleans Ever Be the Same Again?....."

New York Times: "Higher Death Toll Seen; Police Ordered to Stop Looters"

"Officials said there was no choice but to abandon New Orleans, perhaps for months. President Bush pledged vast assistance, but said, "This recovery will take years." Another story: "Not since Sept. 11, 2001, has President Bush faced a test quite like the one he confronts now."

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The Guardian: "Lloyd Dumas, professor of political economy and economics at the University of Texas at Dallas, criticized the government's failure to oversee a more efficient evacuation. "It's remarkable that with the massive restructuring of the federal government that took place with the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, they don't have more well thought-out plans to evacuate a city like New Orleans," he said.

"An emphasis should be placed on plans that have multiple purposes, like evacuation plans for a city like New Orleans that can of course be useful in the event of a terrorist attack but also in the event of a natural disaster like this one ... There were plans during the cold war to evacuate major cities in a few days."

First Comment from Overseas:

HUGO CHAVEZ: "That government had no evacuation plan, it is incredible, the first power in the world that is so involved in Iraq ... and left its own population adrift..."

www.alertnet.org

FROM MY DRY LIVING ROOM.....

You sit there watching the TV reports and staring in disbelief and then you start boiling as disgraced former GOP House leader Robert Livingston on FOX ventilates his frustration by denouncing the looters--how could they?--That is what he seems most upset about in all the carnage....

Click. On MSNBC, there's a phone call from an aide in a State Hospital who reports that while the Tulane hospital across the street has been evacuated, no one has come to help the chronically sick people in his hospital. They are the poor. They are forgotten.

Click: Back to Fox: An articulate young doctor warns the worse is yet to come with public health officials fearing that water-borne diseases can lead to an epidemic. What is being done about that? So far this next crisis is largely unreported!

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Click. The Mayor was furious on Good Morning America denouncing the "friggin" people who let him and his city down by not fixing the levees and stopping the floods. Mayor disappointed was the graphic.

Click Larry King is looking for good news in a story of the first baby being born.

Click: On NBC , GE brings good things to life. At least one network is running a a prime time special. Brian Williams in shirtsleeves or Dateline.. Heartbreaking reports. People have no homes, no food. Are the other networks silent in prime time?

Cut to commercial for spicy shrimp. Yum. Flip the Dials: TV as usual, very different from the 9/11 no business as normal approach.

MAKING THE MESS IN IRAQ LOOK GOOD

The screw ups in our Gulf are approaching the ones in the other Gulf...It is almost at Iraq levels as poor planning and a delayed reponses contributes to more death and destruction...Its not just pathetic. Its criminal. Where is the cavalry? The Red Cross?

What is the priority--to defend Walmart from the looters or find shelter and food for people who are going without? Is shipping thousands of traumatized people from dome to dome, from the Superdome to Houston's AstroDome in 500 buses the best we can do as a nation? One official says they will be there for weeks.

A part of America, and the center of our musical culture is being washed away while MTV holds an awards show that drew more viewers. Like in Iraq, we are sending in the military while platoons of doctors and construction workers and relief agencies are needed.

The lake that is now New Orleans will stand for all time as a symbol of the Bush Administration's "achievement" even as an government economist spinsthe impact saying the

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effects will be short lived because of all the reconstruction money that will be pumped in putting people back to work. What people goes unsaid. Sounds like Iraq, doesn't it? In many quarters the lights there are still not on.

Anger quickly turns to SHAME. Shame. Shame, Shame.

WHO DIDN'T SEE IT COMING?

Sid Blumenthal writes on Salon.com

"A year ago the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed to study how New Orleans could be protected from a catastrophic hurricane, but the Bush administration ordered that the research not be undertaken. After a flood killed six people in 1995, Congress created the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, in which the Corps of Engineers strengthened and renovated levees and pumping stations. In early 2001, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued a report stating that a hurricane striking New Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the U.S., including a terrorist attack on New York City. But by 2003 the federal funding for the flood control project essentially dried up as it was drained into the Iraq war. In 2004, the Bush administration cut funding requested by the New Orleans district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for holding back the waters of Lake Pontchartrain by more than 80 percent.

"Additional cuts at the beginning of this year (for a total reduction in funding of 44.2 percent since 2001) forced the New Orleans district of the Corps to impose a hiring freeze. The Senate had debated adding funds for fixing New Orleans' levees, but it was too late.

"The New Orleans Times-Picayune, which before the hurricane published a series on the federal funding problem, and whose presses are now underwater, reported online: "No one can say they didn't see it coming ... Now in the wake of one of the worst storms ever, serious questions are being asked about the lack of preparation."

www.salon.com

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Why the Levee Broke

www.alternet.org

DISSECTOR READERS OFFER ANALYSIS

Mediachannel readers have been passing information along. Mary McCarthy notes:

"Officials knew w/out a doubt this disaster was a near inevitability. The city has 10,000 body bags stockpiled to handle the expected fatalities.

See this article from the Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct. '04.

"The Red Cross has estimated 25,000 to 100,000 would drown, and I don't think that is unrealistic," said Ivor van Heerden, director of Louisiana State University's Center for the Study of Public Health Impacts of Hurricanes. About 300,000 of the area's 1.2 million people would not evacuate, he predicted, and many of those would be the most vulnerable - elderly, disabled, homeless, carless."

hurricane.lsu.edu

"If it was clear to officials that up to 25% of the residents would be unable to evacuate, why do officials appear to be quite unprepared for this eventuality? Furthermore, the percentage of New Orleans residents living in poverty is very high. I heard between 30-40% but this is unconfirmed. Nevertheless, it's clear many could not AFFORD to leave the city.

"Also, why - in light of the possibility of levee breaches and storm surges - did Tulane Univ. Hospital install their generators on the second floor, necessitating an evacuation? (while an evacuation was probably inevitable in any case, this second floor choice still left the hospital highly vulnerable.)

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"Additionally, it's also a FACT that dramatic wetland loss has left the southern coasts defenseless against these storm events. (again, see the above article.) and, in fact, the levee building contributes to the degradation, setting up a spiral pattern of levee building=wetland loss=flooding= more levees=more loss.

"I'm a reporter. I cover cable television. I monitored all the cable news channels yesterday. I only caught only a single, passing mention on Fox regarding wetland loss. (There may have been some that I missed). It was a remark made by a U.S. New and World Report reporter.

"CNN covered both global warming and the wetland loss issue. According to a local environmentalist, the problem is well known on the southern coasts and a \$14 billion proposal - I believe developed in partnership w/ the Army Corp - to restore wetlands has apparently not been implemented. The advocate for this proposal, who said it was avail. on-line, observed that this country spends \$14 billion in just two weeks in Iraq.

"Rebuilding is futile if state and federal officials fail to address the fundamentals that contributed to this problem in the first place, i.e. environmental degradation.

"The damage done by Katrina is far worse than 9-11. Furthermore, the probability of a hurricane "attack" was far, far greater than any terrorist attack.

HOME LAND SECURITY NOW IN CHARGE

Danny Cassidy notes that the Homeland Security bureaucracy has maneuvered itself into the disaster action while pollution standards are being relaxed: "Anti-pollution standards for gasoline and diesel fuels are being eased across the country until Sept. 15 in a step meant to ease shortages"(NYT)

He is amused and not amused:

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"hahahahahahahahahahahahaha ya gotta laugh ta' keep from cryin'. they are relaxing pollution standards. Chertoff is looking for terrrrrrrists. the governor of Lousiana may have found the, tonight on PBS she spent most of her time ranting against those who "did not leave New Orelans" as told. (where were the bus tickets?). saying law and order would be first priority...."

TSUNAMI COMPARISON

Bradley Laing compares New Orleans to the Tsunami:

"The Tsunami killed maybe 150,000 without warning: New Orleans had decades of emrgency planning and a planned evacuation.

"The governments in the countries hit by Tsunamis never spent the money for an early warning system. Or in 2004, one would not have done any good because the tidal wave hit too fast.. Certainly some countries were hit first, and others later, so that in an age of instant messaging the word of a tsunami in one place could have been zapped to another place in danger and emergency plans followed, if anyone had been willing to plan for it...

"People keep building in places where they are asking for trouble. Around New Orleans they drain the wet lands needed to absorb hurricanes..."

IRAQ CONNECTION

Nicholas Karlin tells us: "At least nine articles in the Times-Picayune from 2004 and 2005 specifically cite the cost of Iraq as a reason for the lack of hurricane- and flood-control dollars."

mslibrarian.dailykos.com

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Ilene Proctor passes along info on the cuts in the city's protection program:

"

(1) "It appears that the money has been moved in the president's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq, and I suppose that's the price we pay. Nobody locally is happy that the levees can't be finished, and we are doing everything we can to make the case that this is a security issue for us.

-- Walter Maestri, emergency management chief for Jefferson Parish, Louisiana;
New Orleans Times-Picayune, June 8, 2004.

"2) New Orleans had long known it was highly vulnerable to flooding and a direct hit from a hurricane. In fact, the federal government has been working with state and local officials in the region since the late 1960s on major hurricane and flood relief efforts. When flooding from a massive rainstorm in May 1995 killed six people, Congress authorized the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project, or SELA.

"Over the next 10 years, the Army Corps of Engineers, tasked with carrying out SELA, spent \$430 million on shoring up levees and building pumping stations, with \$50 million in local aid. But at least \$250 million in crucial projects remained, even as hurricane activity in the Atlantic Basin increased dramatically and the levees surrounding New Orleans continued to subside.

"Yet after 2003, the flow of federal dollars toward SELA dropped to a trickle. The Corps never tried to hide the fact that the spending pressures of the war in Iraq, as well as homeland security -- coming at the same time as federal tax cuts -- was the reason for the strain. At least nine articles in the Times-Picayune from 2004 and 2005 specifically cite the cost of Iraq as a reason for the lack of hurricane- and flood-control dollars.

"In early 2004, as the cost of the conflict in Iraq soared, President Bush proposed spending less than 20 percent of what the Corps said was needed for Lake Pontchartrain, according to this Feb. 16, 2004, article, in New Orleans CityBusiness: The \$750 million Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection project is another major Corps project, which remains about 20% incomplete due to lack of funds, said Al Naomi, project manager. That project consists of building up levees and protection for pumping stations on the east bank of the Mississippi River in Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Charles and Jefferson parishes.

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"The Lake Pontchartrain project is slated to receive \$3.9 million in the president's 2005 budget. Naomi said about \$20 million is needed. "The longer we wait without funding, the more we sink," he said. "I've got at least six levee construction contracts that need to be done to raise the levee protection back to where it should be (because of settling). Right now I owe my contractors about \$5 million. And we're going to have to pay them interest."...

THE WAR EFFECT

Paul Craig Roberts writes on Counterpunch.org

"Chalk up the city of New Orleans as a cost of Bush's Iraq war. There were not enough helicopters to repair the breeched levees and rescue people trapped by rising water. Nor are there enough Louisiana National Guards available to help with rescue efforts and to patrol against looting.

The situation is the same in Mississippi.

The National Guard and helicopters are off on a fools mission in Iraq.

Now the Guardsmen, trapped in the Iraqi quagmire, are watching on TV the families they left behind trapped by rising waters and wondering if the floating bodies are family members. None know where their dislocated families are, but, shades of Fallujah, they do see their destroyed homes.

Comment on this post...

Media Coverage of the Disaster Slanted

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THE DISASTER COVERAGE

Captions Based on Pigmentation: The difference between "looting," "finding," and "shopping."

Dustin3000 | Flickr.com

www.flickr.com

www.flickr.com

DiversityInc.com asks: "Are white people "finding" something to eat while black people are "looting" for lunch in New Orleans and other flooded areas?"

"There were two different images-one shot by an AFP/Getty Images photographer and another from The Associated Press (AP)-and each had a different caption when published on Yahoo.com. In the AP photograph, the photo shows a black person with some food. The caption below the picture says he's just finished "looting" a grocery store. The other photo captured two white people with the caption describing how they were "finding" bread and soda from a grocery store, BoingBoing.Net reports. In both pictures, the subjects are swimming, holding food, with no stores in sight.

""The difference in words may be indicative of racial bias in the mainstream media. In a related commentary, Christina Pazzanese wrote in a Poynter.org forum a media-studies organization, that in the national "crisis mode" coverage of the aftermath of Katrina, there have been a number of professional challenges for everyone in the media around racial and economic sensitivity. The hurricane coverage also is taking place in a predominantly poor, black part of the country. "I am curious how one photographer knew the food was looted by one but not the other ? Should editors in a rush to publish poignant or startling images, relax their standards or allow personal or regional biases creep into captions and stories?" Pazzanese asks. We all should be asking that question too."

MEDIA WISEMEN AT WORK (CNN STYLE)

Cafferty: "You have to wonder, watching these pictures, and listening to these accounts, if we'll

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ever see the city of New Orleans as we all remember the Big Easy. Where's President Bush? Is he still on vacation?

Blitzer: He's cut short his vacation. He's coming back to Washington tomorrow.

Cafferty: Well, that would be a good idea. He was out in San Diego, I think, at a Naval air station giving a speech on Japan and the war in Iraq today. Based on his approval rating in the latest polls, my guess is getting back to work might not be a terrible idea....

THE LATEST MILLER SPECULATON (SEE INOTE BELOW)

A new wrinkle in the Plame affair from the Financial Times:

An intriguing new theory has emerged in the case of Valerie Plame, the outed CIA operative.

The mainstream media has focused on Karl Rove, President Bush's chief political guru, as the source of the original story identifying Plame. The alleged motive was revenge against former ambassador Joseph Wilson, Plame's husband, an outspoken critic of the Iraq war.

"Observer now hears a new angle on the story is circulating inside the Justice Department.

"It involves Judith Miller, the veteran New York Times reporter currently languishing in a Virginia jail for refusing to reveal her source(s) in the Plame affair.

Many have assumed that Miller - who never actually wrote a story identifying Plame as an operative - is protecting Rove and/or other administration officials. But the missing link is that Miller is not a political reporter, but rather an investigative journalist who co-wrote a book on America's secret war against biological weapons and later published controversial articles on

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Iraq's effort to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

"Now here's the twist: Plame herself is a CIA operative who also specialised in weapons of mass destruction and bio-terrorism. So did Miller get to know Plame while she was writing her book or even use her as a source for other WMD stories? Despite 56 days' imprisonment and a vociferous campaign to release her - Miller is staying mum.

"But at some point, surely, the truth will come out."

news.ft.com

TV WATCH TAKES ON CONSERVATIVE TV WATCHERS

PR Watch passes this along: " Tired of being picked on by religious media watchdog groups, big media is fighting back with its own advocacy group. NBC Universal, Viacom and News Corp. have launched the group TV Watch to "advocateparental controls and oppose government intervention" into TV programming, the Dallas Morning News reports. TV Watch, "an unusual mix of corporations, creative types and conservative, free-market proponents," will go head-to-head with Brent Bozell's conservative Parents Television Council. Several media companies, Americans for Tax Reform and the Creative Coalition have provided seed money for TV Watch, whose executive director, Jim Dyke, is a former Communications director for the Republican National Committee."

SOURCE: Dallas Morning News, August 21, 2005

RIGHT WING TARGETS FONDA-GALLOWAY TOUR MOONBATCENTRAL.COM ON SMEARS TO COME

"Fonda-Galloway Traitors? Tour Coming to Boston

Posted by Rocco DiPippo @ Tuesday 30 August 2005, 11:40 pm

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"As noted yesterday on Moonbat Central, the loathsome traitor Jane Fonda has teamed up with George Galloway, the British MP who openly supports Islamist terror, for an anti-war (pro-Islamist) speaking tour.

"The tour kicks off in Boston on September 13th at 6:30pm at Faneuil Hall. Tickets can be purchased [here](#).

"Though it sickens me to put even one cent into the pockets of those who support criminals who'd like to kill me, I will go see what my mind is currently struggling to grasp: the specter of 900 Americans cheering two people who give support to those who murdered 2,948 of our countrymen on September 11th, 2001.

"The event is co-sponsored by the ultra-left Traprock Peace Center in Deerfield, Mass.

"What is wrong with these people?"

moonbatcentral.com

Comment on this post...

Letters: Speaking up for the "Looters"

Mediachannel's new director of outreach Christopher Robin Cox shares his take on New Orleans on his Mad Optimist Blog.

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"I have a personal attachment to this catastrophe, for I lived in New Orleans for a little more than a year, back in the late 90's. It is, or was, a truly distinctive city, whose character can only be understood if one lives there. Its history is steeped in the tragedy of slavery and the beautiful music that came to the world as a result of that savagery - jazz. New Orleans and her great people have always been able to make something beautiful out of something hideous and cruel. But I don't know if she is going to get through this one.

"To this very day, 67 percent of the population of New Orleans is Black, and only 28 percent is White, and the vast majority of the city's residents make less than \$50,000 per year, with most below \$30,000 . When I lived there I was still a jazz musician, making my living that way. I lived in a house with five other people, and so did almost every musician I knew - the ones that actually had a house to live in anyway. Who knows where those souls are now. I just hope they all got out, and if they didn't? Well, I hope they are in a good place. Without live jazz and blues, all-night bars, spicy food by the pound and Benets with chicory coffee, New Orleans ceases to exist.

"What does all of this have to do with the demographics of the place? Everything. New Orleans is a city that exists on the backs of the underpaid, underprivileged and underappreciated people who draw millions to the place on a daily basis: musicians, bartenders, waitresses, strippers and cooks. I could go on forever about what makes the world of New Orleans go round, but it is pointless, because New Orleans is essentially no more. The people of New Orleans are all simultaneously homeless, except for the privileged few who may have had a place to go and enough money put away to live on for a while.

"The people who didn't have any place to go, or money to go with are precisely the people who are "looting" the businesses of New Orleans. Most of those people are Black, as one could easily assume when we consider the demographics I mentioned above. Guess what CNN's video coverage of the "looting" looks like. That's right, black faces running in and out of local stores with everything they can get their hands on.

What the hell would you do? Anyone who has ever lived in that city knows that the most deep-down primal concern - whether voiced or not - is that someday the levees would break and New Orleans would become a huge festering swamp. In some sense, we could say that the 'we'll sleep when we die' mentality of life in New Orleans is rooted in that fact that the whole place was essentially doomed from the get-go. Everybody knows that a city built below sea level, in between a giant lake and a giant river, each held off by a levee, is going to lose the battle someday. That day has come, and everybody in New Orleans knows it. That's why it is futile to even try to prevent people from looting, or going stark-raving mad for that matter. Even

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policemen in New Orleans have been caught looting for themselves.

"In some cases the police are participating in the looting under the pretense of providing for the sick. As Guy Gugliotta and Peter Whorisky of the Washington Post reported: "In many cases the looting took place in plain view of police and National Guardsmen charged with controlling it. At one Canal Street pharmacy just outside the French Quarter, the AP reported, two police officers stood guard as workers loaded large laundry bins full of medications, snack foods and bottled water." The officer standing outside said, "This is for the sick. We can commandeer whatever we see fit, whatever is necessary to maintain law." Humm, very interesting. If the situation in New Orleans is so bad that the police department is allowing for looting on behalf of the sick, should we really speak of the citizens that are potentially doing the same as "looters".

"I challenge the notion that those who are taking whatever they can get their hands on from any retail establishment in their path are simply "looters", akin to those who looted during the Rodney King riots, for example. This is, without any doubt, a completely different situation. For CNN or FOX or anybody else to show film footage consisting solely of Black men and women running in and out of retail stores with armloads of products, in an apparent attempt to provide evidence of just how bad things are down there, is ludicrous. They would be much more factual if they showed footage of those very same people explaining why they are "looting". In other words, represent them for who they are: survivalists. That is, they are doing what is natural in a situation like this; they are taking everything they can get their hands on, because anything may be of benefit to them in the near future when they are trying to figure out how they are going to survive, to feed their kids, to eat, to sleep and to drink. It may help to take another look at that CNN footage.

THE OIL EFFECT

Eugene Duran who has been lobbying me to wake up to the peak oil crisis writes:

Danny, I've been warning about gas prices due to Peak Oil and now there will be Katrina to blame. Katrina could mask the Peak Oil problem for a while and justify higher oil prices, But we've been shutting down refineries for a decade now, and if the damage to our oil infrastructure is as bad as is indicated, Welcome to the thin ice of modern life. It would have only taken a small glitch to start an economic tumble. Is Katrina it? Stay tuned.

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Tom Wieliczka writes to CNN:

"Why Haven't These Bush Budget Cuts Been Reported?

"Bush goes out West, plays golf, gives a VJ-Day Speech and WAITS well past the hurricane hitting the Gulf States, when he could have had "all his ducks lined-up in a row", ready for the aftermath of the hurricane. They could have been "ready to go", immediately after the storm passed.

"Instead of building up the levees, Bush cuts the budget for them, so he can do his tax cuts and spend money on a needless war in Iraq. The war should be in Afghanistan against Bin Laden.

"Like the saying goes: You Can Pay Me Now Or You Can Pay Me Later and Bush Picks TO Pays Tons More - Later!!?

FOREIGN AID NEEDED?

Carol from Illinois asks:

"Are we getting any of the help we lavish on others? I don't begrudge it--ever--but I haven't heard anything about reciprocation. I would think Russia, at least, would send some subs to house our people in...what do you think?

A CALL TO ALL BLOGGERS TO HELP

"This is Chris Bowers of MyDD. I just wanted to let everyone know that within the next twelve or fourteen hours, we will begin a coordinated effort to help Katrina victims. The effort will include a free blogad that people can put up for a little while, and will allow liberal and progressive

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bloggers to track the total amount of donations they and their readers are making to the Red Cross (where all of our donations are going). I will have more information shortly.

"I just wanted to let everyone know. Spread the word, especially to progressive bloggers who are neither in Philadelphia nor on Blogads. Tomorrow, we rise together to support those in need."

Bill D writes from Barcelona:

"Missed perhaps by many of those following the natural disaster in New Orleans was the bombing of two houses by US forces in Iraq, with the resultant death of about 50 civilians. When asked to explain their action, the military said that they had killed a known terrorist, "Abu Islam".

According to Aljazeera however, "Abu Islam is an alias used by several fighters." In other words, US forces killed somebody. But they didn't know that he wasn't just one person."

english.aljazeera.net),

MEDIA SHOCK

Adam Mcconnel who contributes reports to us from Istanbul, has been visiting his family in Seattle. He describes his reimmersion in the US media:

"we've been in Seattle for the past month and are heading out Friday; I've gotten the chance to watch a little C-SPAN (both 1 and 2) while here and was amused to see that they both run a HEAVY diet of right-wing speaker and conferences. My news has come solely from Canadian TV and Jon Stewart while here.. .

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WILD BLUE YONDER

Ken Chevis writes from Toronto:

"Danny, about the time wee Georgie was on the stump trying to justify his squandering of life and limb in Iraq, I finished reading an ""Inside Job" by Jim Marrs and "The New Pearl Harbor" by David Ray Griffin. I am also part way through "The 9/11 Commission Report, Omissions and Distortions" by the same author. Because I am an ex-Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, I concentrated on the 9/11 catastrophe in the context of the United States Air Force response. Along with information gleaned from the books, I also did some Internet research, specifically time-line.

"I came to the conclusion that on that particular morning in September, the vaunted USAF could not find its' ass with either hand. Using the performance specifications of my 50 year old Canadian CF100 which I flew in the early 50's, I can safely say that on my worst day, I could have effectively outperformed both the F15's and F18's dispatched to intercept the hijacked airliners. To this day, no one in the USAF or NORAD chain of command has ever been held accountable for their bizarre behavior. Isn't it about time?"

"IT WASN'T JUST BUSH"

Susan writes:

"It wasn't just Bush who was pushing to get that Iraqi constitution done. I sat in on a US Senate Armed Services Committee meeting on June 23, 2005. I heard Senators Levin (Democrat) and Collins (Republican) both state that the Iraqis had to get that constitution written on time, or else there should be "consequences." They both expressed the sentiment that not having it done would harm US troops via increasing the insurgency.

"Here's what I wrote about that in an op-ed in the local paper:

Sen. Levin pointed out that not meeting timetables in Iraq's political processes could have

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negative repercussions for U.S. troops. He suggested that consequences be lined up for the Iraqis for not getting things done on time. I hope those Iraqis realize that they not only have to "do" democracy the way the senator wants, they had better be prompt about it too"

CREDIT WOES: STORIES WANTED

NOTE: If you have a story to tell about your experience with credit companies and banks or worked for one, please get in touch to share your experience. I am doing a film on the subject. I have been getting letters like this:

"Yesterday I had to call MBNA about my account. I was told that as of December of 2005, everyone will have to pay a minimum of 5% of their balance, there will be no longer a tiny minimum. I have been trying to get mine down at \$100.00 a month (receive only less than \$2,000.00 a month two pensions and SS) and I will have to pay probably \$121.00 a month or they will come after me. This for unsecured loans. Again something this administration has pushed through. People are not going to get notice of this (all though it passed some time ago) until November. I think this should be out there now, so people stop charging so much. It is also harder to go bankrupt--what will the people do, with winter coming and the need for oil, at \$400.00 or more to fill the furnace tank?. We are in a terrible mess, a lot of it due to this horrible unnecessary war. "

CHALLENGING THE NEWS

Sarah Meyer writes from England on an experience of challenging a newspaper article she considered biased:

" Last week, Ms. Malia Zimmerman, editor of Hawaii Reporter, ran a column attacking Cindy Sheehan entitled "The Collapsing Universe of a Dark Star Mother" by Andrew Walden, editor of the Hawaii Free Press.

www.hawaiireporter.com

bsites should be

The Battle of New Orleans

Posted by

Thursday, 01 September 2005 02:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 01 September 2005 02:15

Walden's story in The Hawaii Reporter:

www.hawaiireporter.com

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I objected to the attack on Mrs. Sheehan (and others) and wrote the paper (which did not publish my letter) but instead forwarded my letter to Walden for his reply. (After protesting, my letter was published today:)

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Mr. Walden replied to my letter of complaint by shifting the subject and without referring to Cindy at all. Instead, he claimed that the Downing Street Memo (sic) showed that the US/UK overnments "genuinely believed that Saddam had WMDs before the war and "told the truth about what their intel reported. " That, ergo, "the anti-war brigade is lying every time they say Bush and or Blair lied."

"My letter focused on Mrs. Sheehan, but I also challenged his distortions citing five sources.

"Mr. Walden's next e-mail slithered further sideways. "If the public was aware that your kind think it is all a Jewish (oops I mean Israeli) conspiracy to build an oil pipeline thruAfghanistan, you would be toast."

"Did I say that?" I asked in my next email. "What is 'my kind?'" I queried. I asked for an apology.

An Apology? "Nope." Instead, using an ICH article on my website, indexresearch.blogspot.com, he made this stunning accusation: 'Scratch a Downing Street Memo cultist and find an anti-Semite.'" He went on, "stop wasting my valuable time. I do not regard your kind as worthy of my attention ... conversation terminated."

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"Mr. Walden did not know that my beloved mother-in-law was from Byalistrock. Her name was Narefsky."

Sarah was gutsy to challenge that racist mediaspeak but her experience shows how hard it is to get the Bush believers to even hear evidence that challenges their belief systems and for that matter to get media outlets to open their columns to dissenting views. And yet, her persistence and willingness to write resulted in her letter finally getting in the paper.

EVENTS: YOU ARE INVITED

Next week , on Tuesday September 6, Mediachannel readers in the NY area are invited to take part in a SPEAK OUT FOR THE FIRST AMENDMENT as we consider the case of New York Times reporter Judith Miller. I will be moderating a panel at the Laugh Factory (42nd and 8th at 6 PM)....Come hear Vanity Fair's Michael Wolff, the New York Civil Liberties Union's Donna Lieberman, Mark Green and others. It's Free. Have your say! As club owner Jamie Masada puts it on the marquee: "The First Amendment ..no laughing matter."

Please tell your friends.....

Keep your letters coming and be as generous as you can to help the people whose lives have been disrupted by the catastrophe on the Gulf Coast.

Comemnts: write: Dissector@mediachannel.org

If you find the blog of value, please pass it on your friends and urge them to subscribe.

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