

DISASTER IN THE BAYOU: KATRINA'S WRATH

by

Gary G. Tavares

Based on the true story of Hurricane Katrina

Sample script(pages 1-25 of 110)

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FADE IN:

INT. THE DAVIS FAMILY HOME (NEW ORLEANS) – EVENING

GEORGE DAVIS, a New Orleans Fireman and his family (PAT, DERRICK and TAMEKA) are having a party.

The house is filled with family members, guests and members from New Orleans Engine Company two. There are also members of the New Orleans Police Force.

George clears his throat and raises his hands and everyone gets quiet.

GEORGE

Good evening family, guests friends, "men in blue" and fellow firemen. My wife and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for coming out. We definitely appreciate all the love. When I joined New Orleans Fire about ten years ago I knew I was joining a great organization. You guys are truly great and you're like family to me.

George raises a glass of what is actually Apple Cider.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now here is a toast to heroism, integrity and all who wear the uniform of New Orleans' finest. Sorry folks it's just Apple Cider. You guys know the deal.

The guests all laugh as they drink to the toast. Derrick walks through the house with a video camera.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

My son Derrick wants to be the next Spike Lee. I think he's going to do it. Anyway we are going to go ahead and cut the cake. I hope you all have room left for cake. If not your welcomed to take it home. We hope everyone had a good time. Once again thank you all for coming out and for being so generous. I guess I will be seeing you gentlemen tomorrow on the shift.

The guests all converge around the huge cake on the table. The cake has white frosting with blue letters that say: "Congratulations George! A decade of service."

George Takes the knife and starts cutting up the cake and putting the slices on paper plates.

His wife Pat assists him by adding a couple of scoops of Breyer's Vanilla ice cream and passing the plates around to the guests.

INT. CCN NEWS CENTER STUDIO(AUG. 24, 2005) – EVENING

An African-American Reporter, SHARRON MILLS and a Caucasian Reporter, BILL PATTERSON are in the CCN news center studio broadcasting the evening news.

SHARRON

Good evening. I am Sharron Mills and this is Bill Patterson. We start this evening's news with some more bad news from Iraq. Four American Soldiers were killed when their Humvee hit a Land Mine. Two others were seriously injured but are expected to live. Now we go to PETE COLLINS for some news about the weather. Pete.

The News Camera switches over to Pete who is standing near a large colorful map.

PETE

Thank you Sharron. We had a very warm and humid day here today which is really not unusual. In fact most of the country enjoyed pretty nice weather today. But more importantly what I want to focus on right now is this area right here. Tropical Depression Twelve has organized and grown stronger. The storm is now called Tropical Storm Katrina. It's sort of moving in a West-North Westerly direction with sustained winds of forty-five to fifty miles an hour. Right now it's about one hundred thirty-five miles east of Florida.

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

The storm is traveling somewhat erratically but our computer models have it on target to hit Florida around Thursday the twenty-fifth. Before it gets there it can grow even stronger fueled by the warm waters in that area. We will definitely keep an eye on it and keep you posted. Pete Collins CCN News.

INT. A FIRE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Several Firemen (FIREMAN #3, FIREMAN #4 and George) are gathered around the television watching the news.

FIREMAN #3 shakes his head. FIREMAN #4 takes a sip of Coca-Cola from a bottle and shakes his head too. George comes in and sits down in one of the chairs.

FIREMAN #3

Man it looks like it's heading for Florida. Them poor folks can't get a break from all them damn twisters.

FIREMAN #4

Yeah it does seem that way.

FIREMAN #3

Shoot them folks will be ready for Katrina. As many hurricanes as they have every year. Besides it may never hit there. Look how far away it is.

GEORGE

Nobody wants to leave there so it's kind of hard to feel sorry for them. Their houses can be blown down several times a year but when you see them on the News they always say they want to rebuild right where they are. Man I would have got to stepping after the first one! I mean we get our share of storms here and there is always the threat of hurricanes, but it's like crazy over there.

FIREMAN #4

Well Florida is pretty nice, I've been there.

FIREMAN #3

Okay then is it nicer than New Orleans?

FIREMAN #4

Umm that's a tough one. I guess since New Orleans is my home I might be a little bias.

GEORGE

Well I have been to California. It's okay once you get used to the high prices, forest fires, landslides and last but certainly not least the earth quakes. At least you get some time to prepare for a twister. You can't get prepared for an earthquake and the only warnings are from animals. As you know they can't talk. Some people out there say there is a certain weather that's considered earthquake weather but I don't buy that.

FIREMAN #5 comes out with an apron on as if he has been cooking.

FIREMAN #5

Well gentlemen are you all ready to taste some of my famous Spaghetti?

Nobody moves. They all just stand there staring at him like he's crazy.

FIREMAN #5 (CONT'D)

Well don't everyone charge into the kitchen at once. (Pause) Come on guys just try it, I know you all are hungry. I worked hard to get this just right. It's my new special recipe.

There is a loud tone and they all rush to the Fire engines.

GEORGE

Talk about being saved by the bell!

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.)

Station four, Engine Company two and Rescue One respond to a reported apartment fire at one-six-three-two Banks Street.

(MORE)

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Cross Street is South Broad.
Response is code three. This is
first alarm out. Time out thirteen
fifteen.

The Firefighters don their equipment and jump on the fire trucks.

Fireman #5 doesn't realize he is still wearing the apron. He has all his equipment on plus the apron.

Fireman #4 points to it and Fireman #5 just shakes his head and pulls the apron off sort of embarrassed.

FIREMAN #3
I hope you remembered to turn off
your Spaghetti.

FIREMAN #5
Yeah I turned everything off.

They speed out of the station with sirens and lights blazing.

EXT. ON SCENE AT THE APARTMENT COMPLEX - MOMENTS LATER

Dark smoke and flames pours from the apartment complex. All the residents and neighbors are outside watching their complex go up in smoke.

The Firemen pull out hoses, ladders, axes and other equipment.

They pressurize the hoses and attack the blaze. George goes to another firefighter, FIREMAN #6, to get some information.

GEORGE
Is everyone out?

FIREMAN #6
Yeah everyone got out safely. All we have so far are minor burns and smoke inhalation injuries. When we got here the apartment was fully involved. We managed to save two residents that were trapped right there on the first floor.

GEORGE
(Grabbing a hose)
Okay that's good. Good job!

EXT: A NEW ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE AFTERNOON

A New Orleans Police car cruises through a neighborhood. There is a group of African-American teens standing on the corner.

The Police slow their vehicle slightly and hit their siren. The group disperses rather quickly. OFFICER RICK BROWN and his partner OFFICER RON JOHNSON are inside the car.

INT: THE POLICE CAR- MOMENTS LATER

OFFICER BROWN

I guess It's going to be one of those days.

OFFICER JOHNSON

Yeah it looks that way. Never a dull moment.

OFFICER BROWN

So when do you plan to take your vacation?

OFFICER JOHNSON

I am planning on taking it next week.

OFFICER BROWN

Where do you plan on going?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Well the wife and I just plan on chillin' and spending some time together.

OFFICER BROWN

You aren't going to take the Mrs. anywhere?

OFFICER JOHNSON

No we're going to stay local. We may go up north to Shreveport. She has some family up there.

OFFICER BROWN

I can't wait to take a vacation. Shit I definitely need the time off. We're short staffed and out-gunned and it looks like they might freeze vacations soon.

OFFICER JOHNSON
I don't think they will do that too soon, but you never know.

OFFICER BROWN
Man the fellas are burnt out and they need time off.

OFFICER JOHNSON
But what can you do? They need our services and we made an oath to serve and protect.

OFFICER BROWN
Easy for you to say hell you're getting ready to get some time off.

Officer Johnson puts his hand on Officer Brown's Shoulder.

OFFICER JOHNSON
You going to be all right Officer Brown? I mean I need you out here.

OFFICER BROWN
Don't worry man I'm cool and I got your back out here.

OFFICER JOHNSON
You sure? Because you can get some Administrative Leave if you need it.

OFFICER BROWN
Look I said I'm fine. Now I still love this job but I don't necessarily agree with some of the politics that go along with it.

A White Mercedes Benz with dark tinted windows slowly drives by the patrol vehicle in the opposite direction.

Officer Johnson spins the steering wheel aggressively. His tires squeal as he does a quick U-turn.

OFFICER JOHNSON
(Hits the lights/siren)
That looks like TERRANCE WALKER'S car.

OFFICER BROWN
The suspect from the one eighty-seven?

OFFICER JOHNSON

Affirmative! He's failing to stop
advise Dispatch we're in pursuit!

OFFICER BROWN

(On the two-way radio)

Dispatch this is Unit six in
pursuit of one eighty-seven
suspect. White two thousand five
Mercedes with dark tinted windows,
Louisiana personalized "Dark Man"
Common spelling. David-Adam-Robert-
King-Mary-Adam-Nora. Westbound on
M-L-K Boulevard. Speed is
approximately fifty. Suspect may be
heading to I-ten freeway.

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.)

Ten-four unit six I copy you're in
pursuit of one eighty-seven
suspect, Westbound on M-L-K
boulevard. Units available assist
the officers in pursuit. Response
is code three. All units be advised
suspect may be armed with Automatic
weapons. Air support and a tactical
unit have been dispatched and are
en route.

Suddenly the Mercedes slows down. A suspect pops up through
the sun roof with an AK-47 and fires at the pursuing
officers.

The Patrol car's windshield is riddled with bullets. The
car's radiator blows steam from a holes created by the
bullets.

The officers stop the pursuit abruptly as their car spins
out.

They jump out of the car, draw their weapons and point them
towards the suspects as they speed away.

OFFICER JOHNSON

You okay?

OFFICER BROWN

Yeah I'm okay!

Officer Brown presses the two-way microphone on his shoulder
as he hunkers down behind the car with his weapon drawn.

OFFICER BROWN (CONT'D)
Shots fired! Shots fired! Automatic
weapons fire! Vehicle is disabled!
Units assisting step it up!

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.)
Dispatch copies shots fired. Unit
six is disabled... What's your
twenty unit six?

OFFICER BROWN
Around the twenty-four hundred
block of M-L-K. Suspect vehicle
continued Westbound, possibly
heading to I-ten. My partner and I
are not hit. I repeat my partner
and I are not hit.

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.)
Ten-four unit six. Officers are
requesting units to step it up...

OFFICER JOHNSON
Damn it I hate when they have
automatic weapons!

OFFICER BROWN
(Brushes himself off)
Yeah tell me about it. Shit I'm
thinking about joining the Tactical
Unit. At least they have the
weapons they need to do the job.

A Police Helicopter streaks through the sky above. Moments
later several units screech on scene with lights and sirens
blazing.

Several police officers approach Officer Brown and Officer
Johnson.

Some units speed by to catch up to the Mercedes. SERGEANT
PARKER is among the officers that approach Officer Brown and
Officer Johnson.

SERGEANT PARKER
Officer Brown and Officer Johnson.

OFFICER JOHNSON
Yes Sergeant Parker.

SERGEANT PARKER
First of all are you guys okay?

OFFICER BROWN

That's affirmative we're both okay,
but I can't say the same for the
car.

SERGEANT PARKER

That's okay don't worry about the
car, it can be replaced.

RADIO TRANSMISSION (V.O.)

Unit eight to Dispatch be advised
suspects are in custody at this
time.

DISPATCH TRANSMISSION (V.O.)

Ten-four unit eight. Units in
pursuit can slow it down to code
two. Suspects are in custody.

EXT. THE FRENCH QUARTERS - LATER THAT DAY

The French Quarters is congested with people. Travelers and
Tourist take pictures. It appears to be business as usual.
Traffic around the area is quite heavy.

EXT. AN INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD (NEW ORLEANS) - LATER

Cars cruise the streets. Young men pull over to talk to young
ladies. Young women with kids walk through the groups of guys
standing on the corners.

Some people wonder aimlessly as if they're lost. Once again
New Orleans Police make their presence known as they cruise
slowly through the neighborhood.

EXT. NEAR NORTH MIAMI BEACH FLORIDA - 25 AUG. 2005 -EVENING

Eighty mile per hour winds batter the coast of Florida. Waves
come crashing ashore as high as six feet.

Wind-driven rain destroys anything in it's path. A Local CCN
Reporter, DAN WHITE, is hunkered down in a shelter.

There are dozens of military-type cots set up and about fifty
people wait the storm out. The cameraman points to Dan to
start the news story.

DAN WHITE

I'm down here hunkered in at a local shelter here near North Miami Beach along with about fifty other people. We can actually hear the winds whistling outside. Those winds accompanied with heavy rains could be sustained at around eighty miles per hour. We plan to get out there just as soon as it is safe to do so and do some damage assessment. Dan White, CCN News, live from a North Miami Beach shelter. Back to Pete in the CCN Studio.

INT. THE CCN NEWSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Pete is in front of the Colorful map. The round colorful storm truly shows plenty of reds and yellows. It appears to be a large storm that covers a lot of territory.

PETE

Thank you Dan. It looks like the storm will be continuing through this part of Florida and then head into the Gulf of Mexico. We expect it to head northward, hugging the Coast of Florida. We don't expect it to weaken a whole lot, in fact it might strengthen. Meantime there are hurricane watches and warnings from here all the way to the Pan Handle. One thing is for sure, Katrina is definitely not finished. We will have to continue to watch her. Pete Collins, CCN News.

INT. A STORM CHASER AIRPLANE - (27 AUG.) DAY

Reporter Richard Macfarland is once again in the air. This time he is in flight with two pilots from a Storm Chaser airplane.

Their names are CAPTAIN MYERS and CAPTAIN RICHARDSON. They are all wearing headsets as they bounce around from the turbulence.

RICHARD

Good afternoon. Once again I am reporting high in the sky.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

This time It's from the eye of the storm inside the storm Tracker One airplane. I am with these very brave storm Chasers, Captain Myers and Captain Richardson. Now their job is to fly in here, drop this tube into the eye of Katrina and get out and land safely. So captain Myers what information have you gathered from the storm?

CAPTAIN MYERS

So far this one looks like the biggest one of the season. It appears the winds have picked up again and the eye is very organized and pronounced. This one has the potential to hit landfall as a category four or five.

RICHARD

It's still on target to hit somewhere between Louisiana and Alabama correct?

CAPTAIN MYERS

That's correct. It could cause some serious damage to whichever area it hits especially along the coastal areas. The initial storm surge will be intense. It will cause extremely heavy rains, winds and flooding.

RICHARD

Thank you Captain Myers. I will step back and let you guys do your job. Richard Macfarland live from the Storm Chaser one airplane over Katrina.

Richard faces the news camera.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

We will continue to watch this storm as it heads for landfall. Now back to Pete in the CCN Newsroom.

INT. THE CCN NEWSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Pete is standing in front of an illuminated colorfully animated picture of New Orleans and the cities and towns along Lake Pontchartrain.

PETE

Thanks Dick. Okay right here we have New Orleans which is already considerably below sea level. Here is Lake Pontchartrain. The only thing separating the water from entering these areas are Levees along here and here. We're told these levees would only be able to withstand about a category two Hurricane. Katrina could hit landfall at a category four or five. Let's hope that doesn't happen because if it does it could be catastrophic for the homes along here. Pete Myers reporting live from the CCN news Severe Weather Watch team.

EXT. IN THE GULF WATERS MILES FROM THE COAST(26 AUG.) - DAY

A boat that has been stranded is being whipped around in the turbulent waters like a toy boat in a bathtub.

They are a long way from land and are caught in some of the bands of Katrina.

They have no power and are taking on water rapidly. Just as they appear to be doomed a Coast Guard helicopter hovers above. The four victims wave their arms frantically.

INT. THE COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - MOMENTS LATER

A Coast Guard Rescuer, COAST GUARD RESCUER #1, and Coast Guard PILOT #1 peer down at the boat and four people. (Aerial view)

PILOT #1

Coast Guard Cutter this is Rescue Hawk one. We have located the disabled vessel and have a visual on four survivors. Will be attempting rescue times four.

The Pilot fights to steady the helicopter as he continues to hover above the boat.

Rescuer #1 lowers the cable and harness. One by one he raises them to safety. Seconds later the boat sinks.

INT. THE COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - MOMENTS LATER

All four victims are on board the helicopter. They are wet and scared but they are alive and well.

COAST GUARD RESCUER #1
(To the Pilot)
Okay we have all four on board.
Let's get out of here before we
have to be rescued.

INT. THE NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER - (AUG. 27) - EVENING

DOCTOR MAXWELL, Director of the National Hurricane Center, looks at a large colorful monitor that shows Hurricane Katrina.

He just sits there looking at it while shaking his head in disbelief.

He spins back and forth and left-to-right on his office chair and fumbles with his pen.

He gets up, clasps his hands behind his back and paces back and forth. He sits back down and then he picks up the telephone.

DOCTOR MAXWELL
(On the phone)
Hello Mayor Wilson. This is Doctor Maxwell, Director of the National Hurricane Center. (Pause) Yes sir. I have spoken to the Governors of Mississippi and Louisiana already this evening. (Pause) I told them how disturbed and worried I am about this Hurricane. (Pause) I've been here over thirty years and I can tell you this one is nasty. It's one of the worst I've seen. (Pause) Yes I would highly recommend evacuations, preferably mandatory evacuations. (Pause) Yes I understand, but this has the potential to change a lot of peoples' lives. (Pause) No problem Mayor, I just wanted you all to understand the magnitude of Katrina. (Pause) Okay Mayor we're all pulling for you and all the people in Katrina's path. (Pause) Thank you Mayor, goodbye.

INT. THE STEPS OF CITY HALL - (28 AUG.) - MORNING

Mayor Wilson, does a public address announcement. CCN news and several other local news personnel are there with cameras and microphones.

MAYOR WILSON

The evacuations are mandatory at this time and we are hoping that the citizens of New Orleans will take Katrina seriously. This is a massive and potentially deadly storm on a collision course with New Orleans. We're planning to have the local emergency personnel and Law Enforcement Personnel on "ready alert." They will be ready but of course their own safety is important too. If you stick around you do it at your own risk. Now I have been in touch with the Governor and I have been assured that all Agencies of interest have been notified and are on standby. If for some reason you are unable to leave New Orleans we ask that you try to make it to one of our hotels, shelters or to the Superdome. We would like for everyone to remain calm under these circumstances. The last thing we need is a major panic.

EXT. INTERSTATE TEN NEW ORLEANS(AUG. 28, 2005) - AFTERNOON

A CCN news Reporter, ROBERT MITCHELL, stands in front of Interstate Ten.

There is extremely heavy traffic behind him in both directions. The news camera pans to the traffic and then to Robert.

ROBERT

As you can see there is extremely heavy traffic on Interstate Ten going Eastbound and Westbound. This is definitely not your typical rush hour traffic. I mean this is Sunday afternoon. As Katrina heads this way many Gulf Coast Residents are simply not taking any chances. Traffic here is absolutely grid-locked.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Several other interstates including Interstate ninety are not doing much better. We interviewed some folks that endured the long gas lines and are now facing the heavy traffic. They are angry and frustrated. They are hoping for the best but are preparing for the worst. Bob Mitchell CCN news. Now we go to Dick live in the CCN news Chopper.

INT. THE CCN NEWS CHOPPER – MOMENTS LATER.

A News Reporter, RICHARD MACFARLAND, adjusts his headset and microphone. He sways back and forth as they experience some turbulence.

RICHARD

Thanks Bob. I have just been advised that we need to pack it up and get ready to land soon. We are experiencing quite a bit of turbulence up here. Besides that it's starting to look like Desert Storm with all the helicopters up here. Now we're going to pan our camera outside here and sort of give you a "bird's eye" view of what Bob was talking about.

The News Camera pans down to Interstate Ten. The cars appear to be stopped for miles and it literally looks like a parking lot. People can also be seen standing near their cars.
(Aerial view)

RICHARD (CON'T) (CONT'D)

Now that's what Interstate ten looks like from our view. traffic is at a virtual stand still for many miles in both directions. We can actually see people standing outside their cars. We can also see thousands of people, who are forced to ride Katrina out, heading to shelters and the Superdome. Let's hope everyone brought his or her patience. Richard Macfarland live inside the CCN news Chopper. back to the studio.

EXT. THE NEW ORLEANS SUPERDOME - LATER

Thousands of people are lined up to seek refuge in the Superdome. The line goes for blocks.

Men, women, children, elderly and disabled all wait in the scorching temperatures.

All they have is each other, the clothes they are wearing and the items they can carry in boxes or bags. MIKE SORENSON, a CCN News Reporter, reports.

MIKE

As you can see there is a steady flow of people seeking refuge in the Superdome. It can hold about eighty thousand people and it is believed it can withstand this type of storm. Many of the folks we spoke to said they simply have no way of getting out. Many of them left everything behind except what they could carry. We're told many of the hotels and shelters are pretty much filled. We're told many of the tourists are going to the bars and clubs. Many of these spots are known for always being open. The owners say that Katrina will not change that. That's in spite of the warnings and mandatory evacuation order. Mike Sorenson CCN News. Back to the studio.

INT. THE DAVIS HOME - EVENING

Pat opens up the door to a large storage closet. There is plenty of food and supplies inside.

She takes down some flashlights from the shelves and loads fresh batteries into them.

She checks several kits that say: Emergency Survival Kit. She calls George on the phone and then puts him on speakerphone mode. Her and the kids are clearly scared.

PAT

Honey are you sure we're doing the right thing by riding this thing out? I'm kind of starting to have doubts.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Yeah I think you all will be okay. I talked to quite a few of the other firefighters and they are having their loved ones head to the local shelters and the Superdome. They feel that may be better than trying to leave the city in all this mess.

PAT

But honey the minivan wouldn't start this morning. I don't know what's going on with it.

GEORGE

Damn it! Honey you all need to get out of there one way or the other. Can anyone give you a ride out of there?

PAT

Baby I can try to find someone but I think we better have some sort of plan "B" in case we can't leave.

GEORGE (V.O.)

You all need to do what we have been training and practicing for. Most of the survival gear and supplies are in the supply closet. You all know what to do so you all have to make sure it's done. You all have to stay calm so you can think clearly. Tell Derrick and Tameka I want to make sure we're all very clear on what we have to do.

DERRICK

Daddy me and Tameka are right here. Mommy has you on the speaker phone.

GEORGE

Okay you all are all on speaker phone. That's good because I won't have to repeat myself. Derrick you are the man of the house so I want you to be strong for your mother and your little sister. Derrick I want you and your sister to help your mother with the supplies.

PAT

Honey I am already on it. I have most of the supplies out and ready. We just wish you could be here too.

GEORGE (V.O.)

I'm hunkered down at the station with about two dozen other Firemen, Rescuers and Police Officers. Baby I have to do my job. We all have to do our job. The men and I know the risks. Lives may depend on us. There is no way they will let any of us go.

PAT

You just come home to us after you finish being a hero. We love you.

GEORGE (V.O.)

I love you all too.

TAMEKA

Daddy I'm scared!

GEORGE (V.O.)

It's okay Tameka. Everything is going to be all right. You just relax honey and help your mother and your brother. Daddy will be home soon.

TAMEKA

Okay daddy.

PAT

Bye honey.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Bye.

Pat clicks off the phone and tries to choke back the tears. She hugs George and Tameka.

INT. THE PRESIDENT'S RANCH IN TEXAS - (28 AUG.) DAY

THE PRESIDENT sits at a large table with very comfortable leather chairs. The VICE PRESIDENT is also there.

There are large flat screen television sets mounted on the wall. One shows Katrina being tracked by Doctor Maxwell.

There are several phones in front of the President along with several papers.

He is holding a teleconference with Emergency Management agencies.

He rocks back and forth, picks up the papers and peers over his glasses at them. He then hits the phone line to start the conference.

The Director of FEMA, MICHAEL MONROE and the Secretary of Homeland Security MICHAEL CHURCHILL are on the line.

THE PRESIDENT

This is the President and I have you all on a secure conference line. Good afternoon FEMA Director Michael Monroe, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Churchill and other Emergency Agency Representatives. Okay I'm directing these questions to you Michael. Please tell me what it looks like. Are we at least half way ready for this one?

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

Well sir this is Michael Monroe, Director of FEMA and I assume you mean me. We are still pulling together resources but I'm told everything is in place at this time. There are still quite a few people in those areas that did not or were not able to get out. Personally I'm thinking the evacuations could have started sooner. We definitely are going to have to make sure the Mayors and Governors of Mississippi and New Orleans take the full heat on that.

THE PRESIDENT

Well let's just cut through the chase I'm aware of all that. What are we looking at as a worse case scenario?

MICHAEL MONROE (V.O.)

Those levees over there are only estimated to be good for a Category two hurricane.

(MORE)

MICHAEL MONROE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If Katrina does come in along here and the Levees break we could be looking at mass flooding and destruction in those low lying areas. There would undoubtedly be extensive loss of life for the residents that stayed behind.

THE PRESIDENT

Okay so that's the worse case scenario. What are the chances of Katrina maintaining her course and speed? Right now she's about a Cat five.

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

At this point it doesn't look like she's going to lose much of her force. She's set to hit land early Monday. I wouldn't be surprised if she actually gained strength.

THE PRESIDENT

Are all the respective Emergency Response teams and Organizations somewhat in place? I am asking you again.

MICHAEL CHURCHILL(V.O.)

This is Secretary Churchill Mister President, that's all been taken care of and they're all on standby at this time. The National Guard is on standby as well as numerous other Emergency Response Agencies. Unfortunately we can't really do much until this thing blows through.

THE PRESIDENT

I mean the biggest disaster would be to this Administration if we are not ready to deal with this after we told the media and the American people we are ready.

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

I would say it's a good thing we recently had those disaster exercises in that area. As you know we do have sort of a "Disaster Plan-of-Action" in place for that area.

THE PRESIDENT

Well when is the last time there has been a storm of this magnitude in those areas?

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

I believe it was Betsy in sixty-five.

THE PRESIDENT

In any case I need your report as soon as possible. I want to make sure every base has been covered. I want some scenarios and procedural stuff with the report too.

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

Okay Mr. President I'll get right on it.

THE PRESIDENT

I want a list of every agency that's standing by on this faxed to me ASAP. I know it's sort of late in the game but I just want to make sure we cover all the bases. I just have a bad itch about this one.

MICHAEL MONROE(V.O.)

Mr. President I can assure you everything is in order. Just relax and take it easy. We'll get through this one just like the others.

THE PRESIDENT

Okay I'm depending on you all to have everything in place. Remember that it's all on your shoulders. If you fail the blame will be on you and not on this Administration.

INT. A GROCERY STORE (NEW ORLEANS-28 AUG.) - AFTERNOON

There is total pandemonium as people grab food and supplies from the shelves.

SHEILA SIMPSON, a Reporter from CCN, is also there for an exclusive interview.

She approaches PAMELA, a shopper, and sticks the microphone in her face.

SHEILA

Good evening I'm Sheila Simpson
from CCN news, Would you mind doing
an interview ma'am?

PAMELA

No I don't mind.

SHEILA

What's you're name?

PAMELA

It's Pamela.

Sheila signals with a "thumbs up" to her Cameraman. The Cameraman does a silent one-two-three count with his fingers and then points to Sheila to signify he's ready.

SHEILA

I'm here at the Big Value Grocery
Store with Pamela. Pamela is one of
the many people here stocking up
on food and supplies. (Pause) So
Pamela you have decided to ride the
storm out right?

PAMELA

Yes me and my family are going to
stay here and ride Katrina out.

SHEILA

Even after the weather service's
warning that this storm could be
heading right towards the New
Orleans and Mississippi Gulf Coast
areas?

PAMELA

Well we have already stocked up on
the basic stuff we'll need to ride
Katrina out. We managed to fill
up the car with fuel in case we
have to move out. I mean we've been
here a while but we actually moved
from Florida. We have rode out many
storms between here and there. It's
almost a family tradition. A lot of
folks I know don't have a ride to
leave in. I know most of my folks
depend on public transportation,
and some people couldn't stand
sitting out there in all that
traffic and heat for hours.

SHEILA

I see, so what kind of things or items are you buying?

The news camera pans to the shopping cart.

PAMELA

I got some non-perishable foods, drinking water, toiletries, extra flashlights and batteries, candles and portable burners. I still need to get more stuff like blankets for one.

SHEILA

So you all feel pretty well prepared to ride out the storm right?

PAMELA

Yes we believe we'll be fine.

SHEILA

Thanks for your time Pamela and I'm sure we'll all be pulling for you and your family to make it through Katrina safely.

Sheila turns and looks directly into the camera.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Many of the folks here we spoke to are saying the same thing. The Manager here expects to run out of food and supplies here soon. With no trucks coming in or out of the area it means he will be forced to close the store. Being there is a mandatory evacuation order in place that might not be such a bad idea. Quite a few of the local Store Owners are closing up early and boarding up their windows. They are not planning on sticking around. Sheila Simpson CCN news. Now back to the Studio.

INT. AN APARTMENT NEAR DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Several neighbors, including NEIGHBOR #2, sets rifles and handguns on a long table.

Four men, including NEIGHBOR #1, Check the weapons and start loading the weapons.

NEIGHBOR #1

Gee I didn't know the neighbors around here had such an arsenal. We have enough firepower here to relieve the troops in the Gulf!

NEIGHBOR #2

Well we just wanted to designate someone here in the neighborhood to watch our homes and property while we're gone. When we found out you guys were riding Katrina out we decided to ask if you would help us out. We are all pleased that you guys are doing this for us.

NEIGHBOR #1

(Opens a box)

You guys brought us food, water, blankets, flashlights, batteries, radios, walkie-talkies and plenty of ammo. I would say we got you guys covered.

NEIGHBOR #2

We are all having to leave a lot of valuables behind. Some of our stuff can't be replaced.

NEIGHBOR #1

Well you all don't need to worry because we are definitely going to hold down the fort. "If they loot we will shoot."

The neighbors from the neighborhood all shake hands with the four guys that will watch their property.

The neighbors then leave. Neighbor #1 addresses the other three guys that will assist him with guarding the property.

NEIGHBOR #1 (CONT'D)

(Stacking the weapons)

Okay Fellas we got work to do. Let's start getting ready. Ready for what? Perhaps urban warfare!