

DISASTER IN THE BAYOU: KATRINA'S WRATH

By

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Inspired by actual events

Sample length version

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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 the New Orleans Fire Department 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 cut the cake. I hope you all have room left for cake. If not, you're welcome 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 the cake, 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 weather news... 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, I want to focus on 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. The storm is traveling somewhat erratically, but our computer models have it on target to hit Florida around Thursday the twenty-fifth.

(MORE)

PETE (cont'd)

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, those 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 gotten 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 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 biased.

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 earthquakes. 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 say there is a certain kind of weather considered earthquake weather, but I don't buy it.

FIREMAN #5 comes out wearing an apron, 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. 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 ALARM 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. Cross Street is South Broad. Response is code three. This is the 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 pour 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 who 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

Aren't you 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've 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 advising Dispatch we're in pursuit!

OFFICER BROWN

(On the two-way radio)  
Dispatch, this is Unit Six in pursuit of 187 suspect.

(MORE)

OFFICER BROWN (cont'd)

White 2005 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. The suspect may be heading to the I-10 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 sunroof 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 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-10. 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 who 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 that 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 Quarter is congested with people. Travelers and tourists take pictures. It appears to be business as usual. Traffic around the area is quite heavy.

## EXT. AN INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD (NEW ORLEANS) - DAY

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 wander 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 its path.

## INT. A SHELTER NEAR MIAMI - EVENING

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 out the storm. The cameraman points to Dan to start the news story.

## DAN WHITE

I'm down here hunkered in at a local shelter near North Miami Beach, along with about fifty other people. We can actually hear the wind whistling outside. Those winds, accompanied by heavy rain, could reach around 80 miles per hour. We plan to get out there just as soon as it is safe to do so and do some damage assessment.

(MORE)

## DAN WHITE (cont'd)

Dan White, CCN News, live from a North Miami Beach shelter. Back to Pete in the CCN Studio.