

Baghdad on the Bayou Redux

Disaster Capitalism and the War on Equality

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Part One:

Wasting America's Wetlands

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that wrecked the city of New Orleans. It was, quite simply, a warfare economy and a sold-out government. It was shoddy pumps and levees, barges run amuck, strategic resources of petroleum and natural gas, environmental deregulation, too much rain, and the destruction of sponge-like barrier wetlands that once absorbed the storm surge. The hurricane was an act of nature, but such storms can no longer be separated from the politics and economics of corporate consumption that are driving the American “war on terror.” Katrina created a huge business opportunity for “government,” for multinational corporations and private profiteers.

New Orleans and the Gulf Coast have now joined the ranks of “Third World” countries—Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Guatemala, Haiti, Somalia, Congo—suffering the shocks of America’s permanent warfare agenda. This global apartheid sanctions vicious actions toward subjects who resist. The black people of New Orleans join the ranks of the homeless, indigenous people suffering genocide, the refugees and internally displaced and other victims of globalization—millions of people set adrift in a sea of nowhere, with no rights, no possessions, no protection and little prospect for survival.¹

Disaster capitalism is showing its teeth in America, and the picture isn’t pretty.

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that displaced an entire population from the lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. It was a flood of biblical proportions and a history of racism and elitism that created poverty and vulnerability in parallel with wealth and privilege. The storm followed decades of business as usual and a “war on terror” that set the stage for a rapid intervention project in urban and social re-engineering.

New Orleans Business Council chairman Jimmy Reiss was quoted in the Wall Street Journal as saying, "Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way, demographically, geographically and politically."

FEMA—the Federal Emergency Management Agency—did not fail. As Louisiana's local Cajun blues musician Tab Benoit told us, there was a plan and it was followed to perfection.² Homeland Security absorbed FEMA in 2001 and Homeland Security is *not* in the business of rescuing people.

After decades of injustice—born out of American slavery—the victims of the storm fell prey to an all-out military invasion involving aircraft carriers, Boeing Chinook and Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters, M-1 Abrams battle tanks, M-2 Bradley fighting vehicles, amphibious assault ships, state-of-the-art weaponry, Blackwater mercenaries, U.S. Special Forces, and the special Bollinger "SWIFT"—the U.S. Navy's interim Mine Warfare Command and Support catamaran.³ High-tech military command and control centers were set up all over the place, some at Lockheed Martin facilities in the Gulf.⁴

They couldn't get people out, but had no problems moving troops and weaponry in.

For most black people this was no rescue, *it was a roundup and removal*, often at gunpoint, but even whites were subjected to criminal military abuses.

According to the U.S. military, at least 60,000 active and reserve U.S. military troops deployed to New Orleans in response to Hurricane Katrina, "which affected tens of thousands of people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast."⁵

Hurricane Katrina "affected tens of thousands" of people? Here is the Pentagon's deceptive information warfare at work. The truth is that Hurricane Katrina affected *hundreds of thousands of people in New Orleans alone*. According to current numbers, at least 200,000 residents of New Orleans and some 500,000-700,000 people along the Gulf coast became "internally displaced persons"—refugees inside the borders of the United States of America.

The Divided Road Home

While the state and national government have celebrated the reconstruction of New Orleans and return of its citizens, at least 200,000 people remain displaced from New Orleans as of December 1, 2007.

The biggest international charity in America, United Way, also minimizes the numbers of displaced people and misrepresents the realities. "Thousands of people were displaced and there has been hundreds of millions of dollars in damage to lives and property along the Gulf Coast," reads a United Way public relations bulletin on December 4, 2007. "Many of those who evacuated have now settled in new areas—thanks to the generosity of many—and may never return."⁶

The United Way summary above suggests that the helping hand of society has blessed the people

displaced from New Orleans, but the inability of hundreds of thousands of people to return to New Orleans is a travesty of injustice. Thousands of families remain separated, scattered across the country, and the American Civil Liberties Union agrees that there are egregious violations of human rights under internationally recognized covenants and treaties.⁷

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that has left hundreds of thousands of United States citizens homeless and destitute.

Homeowners of all stripes suffered casualties in New Orleans, but people of color were blamed for their own suffering and targeted for both elimination and personal profit. Migrant Mexicans were bussed across the border, exploited like slaves and then targeted as illegal aliens. Blacks were universally relegated to the status of criminals and many people were shot outright. The independent film Welcome to New Orleans produced by Rasmus Holm shows white vigilantes in New Orleans bragging about the “open season” on black people, admitting openly and brazenly “we shot ‘em!”

There has been no accountability, and no transparency.

There is no available database that documents exactly where the “thousands” of internally displaced persons are located—or even if they are still alive. There are witnesses to and victims of racial-profiling, police brutality, tortures and summary executions by armed forces, but most witnesses are psychologically and physically traumatized—many simply terrified into silence.

The Ninth Ward, Gentilly and Gretna neighborhoods remain in shambles.

Meanwhile, there are record contracts and profits for Bollinger, Lockheed Martin, Textron, Northrup Grumman and other corporations in New Orleans that continue to manufacture, test and deploy weapons of mass destruction.

This is definitely Baghdad on the Bayou.

Body Counts in New Orleans’ Red Zone

New Orleans is at the heart of America’s most extensive and lucrative petroleum reserves and ground zero for massive defense infrastructure. Like so many before them, post-Katrina contracts benefited Bush cronies like Donald Bollinger—CEO of Louisiana’s Bollinger Shipyards—and Joe Canizaro—a wealthy real estate developer and a leading Bush supporter—and the elite CEO members of committees and boards dictating structural changes behind the scenes.

“Tanks arrived by train and were seen on Canal Street [downtown] by September 1, 2005,” says New Orleans community organizer Kali Akuno. “The tanks are still in New Orleans. We’ve only seen them on rare occasions since July 2007. They are reported downtown at the Marriot from time to time and also in the Ninth Ward.”

Private military forces were paid in the hundreds and often thousands of dollars daily to commit atrocities with the sanction of our now privatized U.S. government. As one witness who worked around the mercenary forces in New Orleans revealed, “these were professional paid killers. They talked about their adventures in Asia and Africa. They had phenomenal weaponry. Killing is part of their vernacular.”⁸

No one will ever know the true body count from the New Orleans Red Zone. The funeral company, Kenyon, a subsidiary of Service Corporation International (SCI), was awarded a *no bid* contract for retrieval of the dead—decaying and bloated bodies abandoned in attics, swept out to sea—cadavers clogging canals and streets because of Kenyon’s slow response. Local funeral directors complained that they were excluded from the recovery efforts to protect Kenyon’s windfall bonuses of \$12,500 per body.

Naomi Klein notes in The Shock Doctrine that Kenyon was accused of improperly tagging bodies and that many bodies were found mummified in attics a year after the flood. Bush crony and campaign contributor, Robert Waltrip, is the chairman of SCI’s board of directors. In 2005, SCI listed revenues of \$1.7 billion.

Dead men tell no tales? FEMA outsourced the body count from Hurricane Katrina to a company—SIC—involved in one of the biggest funeral home scandals in United States history. In a 2001 Florida investigation, the Menorah Gardens cemetery chain was sued for dumping hundreds of bodies into woods where the bodies were devoured by wild hogs. Backhoes were used to open vaults and remove the corpses to make room for more bodies.⁹ SIC owned and operated Menorah Gardens and they paid \$200 million to settle a class action lawsuit filed by family members of the deceased.

Done in by suicide or design, the manager of the Menorah Gardens chain, Peter Hartmann, was later found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning.¹⁰

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that ripped Miss Louise and Miss Edna from neighborhoods that sheltered family and kin for generations. It was an American administration that has transformed Federal Emergency Management into a privatized Homeland Security apparatus which—by design—ignored the defense and protection of the citizens that the same administration vowed with hand upon Bible to protect. Oaths of office became premeditated lies.

The authority of the Constitution and the protections supposedly afforded every American citizen in the Bill of Rights were summarily swept away with the rising tide of “national security.” Witnesses swear that bodies riddled with military caliber bullets were buried in mass graves with the rest of the lies.¹¹

Survivors of Katrina, both black and white, unconsciously quote the bible as they describe their experiences. We heard, “we were seeds scattered to the wind,” and “we have been wandering for years,” and that God “wrought his vengeance.” The experience for the victims was one of objectification. The Gulf of Mexico was transformed by collective psychic shock into a mighty entity more powerful than any gods of retribution or all the voodoo the sorcerers of New Orleans could muster.

Katrina victims became “seeds,” no longer human, denied freedoms of will and desire. They were dehumanized objects, nameless criminals, the subjects of news loops of looting that CNN played again and again to drive the lies home. The message was clear, and too easily believed, an American white-man’s perception instilled through decades of racial media spin. These impoverished residents of the oil rich coast are subhuman; they are not like “us” sitting comfortably in our white-bread homes, thanking a white God that we do not live like them or near them.

“People outside of New Orleans were getting a very one-sided interpretation,” says New Orleans resident Leon Waters. “The villain here was the government.”

The hydra of war and power in New Orleans two years after Katrina has developed many tentacles, and the truth lies partially buried in the mass graves that only a brave few will openly talk about. Truth lies somewhere in the former leper colony that held the bodies not counted in “official” tolls of 1300 dead. It lies onshore in the soils contaminated by arsenic and offshore in the sands of barrier islands contaminated by petroleum wastes. The truth lies with New Orleans Police, federal agents, U.S. troops, ATF and FBI agents, National Guardsmen, Blackwater mercenaries and vigilante whites who know what they saw, and know what they did, and today remain silent—and therefore complicit—in crimes against humanity.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the people of the United States of America have been offered yet another chance to open their eyes and see reality for what it is. However, before this series examines the aftermath, one truth is undeniable. The flood waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi River system were not preordained to reach the 17th Street Canal, the Lower Ninth Ward, or the New Orleans neighborhoods of Gentilly, St. Bernard, Metairie and Lakeview.

There were many warnings that the wetlands, estuaries and tidal swamps of the Mississippi Delta were all that stood between New Orleans and disaster. One of these was a famously prescient 2004 public service announcement (<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UjVBQChwxM>>) by “Mr. Bill,” a.k.a. Walter Williams of satirical Saturday Night Live fame. In the last frames of the film, the clay man is seen standing on the roof of a home, while roads are flooded and impassible.

All the warnings were ignored, for years.

Wasting the Wetlands

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, and hurricane Rita struck land on September 24, 2005. Anyone who disputes the awesome force and violence of these combined storms as they swept across the Gulf and over the land would be denying the obvious. Driven by Category IV hurricane winds and torrential rain, the storm surge washed over the city.

Over the past decades, the coast of southern Louisiana has been losing rather than gaining land. This is undeniable fact. Satellite imagery from NASA and the U.S. Geological Service clearly illustrate the loss of land and estuaries. The blame, and there is plenty to go around, lies squarely with river (mis) management designed to support big industry and big oil. Hurricanes are natural severe weather events that have been named and personified to draw attention away from the honest mistakes, outright lies and criminal actions that have dominated Delta politics and “development” for over 100 years. The loss of land and culture has escalated in the past twenty years, dramatically altering the Mississippi Delta.

Nature, time, and sediment took 100 million years to form the Mississippi River Delta. It took the Army Corp of Engineers less than 100 years to wreck a perfect eco-system that supported both one of the world’s largest fisheries off shore and a culture rich in music, tradition and family ties that lived on it.

Three thousand years ago, the land that now lies under New Orleans did not exist—the site was open water in the Gulf of Mexico. Walter Williams has produced a video illustration of this process <<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-58339635132245662>>.

In the last 100 years, the Mississippi diverted its course to the Atchafalaya River, which begins its flow northwest of New Orleans. Fifty years ago, the Army Corps of Engineers became concerned that the Mississippi would actually change course and form its main channel in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Congress ordered the Corps to construct floodgates that could be opened and closed as necessary to protect economic development along the Delta. This is the Old River Control Structure—the death-knell event that caused a decrease of sediment and the beginning of the end of the Delta. Dredging and channels cut by big oil, hostile environmental action, unregulated expansion, industrial pollution and artificial channeling—otherwise lauded as “economy” and “development”—have completed the destruction. There is a documented net loss of land, saltwater has intruded into fresh-water basins, estuaries and aquifers, and subsidence—sinking of land—has increased.

Since 1932, at least 1.2 million acres of wetlands or 1,900 square miles have vanished from the Louisiana shores—an area about the size of Rhode Island. At least ten square miles are lost every year, and if nothing is done to stop this loss, far more than 500 square miles will disappear by 2050.

Indeed, some 530 square feet disappeared while you were reading the last sentence.

“We’re facing annihilation down here every summer,” says Walter Williams, creator of Mr. Bill, “and my documentary warned about the loss of wetlands protection from hurricanes.” Williams is alarmed by wetlands destruction that has left New Orleans vulnerable to hurricanes every season. In 2002 the State of Louisiana started using Williams’ documentary in the “America’s Wetlands” campaign. It wasn’t long before Shell Oil Company co-opted the movement and polluted the message.

Mr. Bill was soon at war with Shell Oil and the hand of an honest Walter Williams pulled Mr. Bill from the campaign. Williams believes the Wetlands Campaign is selling out to big oil companies—the number one cause of wetlands destruction. Environmentalists and human rights defenders are quick to connect Shell Oil Company’s war on the Gulf wetlands to Shell Oil operations in Nigeria, where Shell supplied weapons to Nigerian troops in their war against the indigenous people, and where Shell, Chevron and other oil companies have devastated the wetlands of the Niger River Delta.¹²

Is the American public composed of nothing more than spineless Mr. Bills? Are we men and women of clay, powerless to determine our collective destiny? Like the Mr. Bill parodies of Saturday Night Live, are we dependent upon a disembodied “Mr. Hand” that hovers over us and makes all of our important decisions?

In the Gulf Coast region the petroleum industry is the biggest “economic” sector and greenhouse-gas emissions are the highest in the nation. Most of the big industry is out of compliance with federal environmental regulations that are weak and inconsequential to begin with, literally watered down by the corporate-owned and increasingly privatized U.S. government.

The Congress is mandated by the Constitution to be the voice of We the (clay) People, and the voice is loud and clear in favor of environmental and social destruction.

A hurricane named Katrina was not to blame for the wetland loss.

What Was Beautiful is Broken¹³

Mainstream media played the battering storm theme over and over but has never addressed the root causes of the rising storm surge: the destruction of the Gulf Coast environment by and for big industry. Millions of acres of Gulf Coast wetlands have been ruined by the military industrial complex.

Like its nearby Gulf Coast neighbors, Louisiana is overrun with industry out of control. Chemical refineries, agribusiness, shipbuilding, paper mills, sugar and timber plantations, industrial trawling and shell-fishing, defense and aerospace industries have obliterated and polluted mile after mile of pristine natural ecology once worthy of World Heritage Site status. Louisiana is rich in flora and fauna that depend upon the wetlands, harboring over 28% of all wetlands in the lower 48 states.¹⁴

Nearly 70 million acres of coastal plain forests once stretched from Virginia to Florida to eastern Texas. Once dominated by longleaf and other species of pine trees, the indigenous forests have mostly been obliterated by logging, plantations and petroleum infrastructure.

With more than 352,000 acres of private plantation lands in Louisiana, Weyerhaeuser Corporation has been a leading destroyer of natural forests. The lower coastal plain was once a continuous moist pine barren known as Gulf Coast pitcher plant bogs, but less than 3% of the

pitcher plant bogs remain.¹⁵ Less than 1% of the original vast grasslands and coastal plain prairies of the western Gulf region remain intact. The giant cypress trees of the bayou wetlands have been mowed down everywhere, and Wal-Mart sold cypress mulch from Louisiana.

Absence of wetlands and increased storm activity create a feedback loop that increases salinity in freshwater systems, including drinking water aquifers. Mangroves and Cyprus trees have unique root systems that trap sediment and protect coastal shorelines from erosion and storm damage but petroleum dredging, chemical pollution and channels are destroying these unique trees.

Once amongst the most beautiful and biologically diverse coral reef ecosystems on the planet, the reef ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico have been rapidly dying off due to siltation (soil runoff), oxygen-depletion, chemical pollution, over fishing and temperature changes caused by industrial dredging, trawling, and especially by drilling and other petroleum activities.

The Gulf Coast has the largest and most valuable shrimp fishery in the United States, and in 1999 the region produced 78 percent of the national total shrimp landings.¹⁶ The large acreage of coastal marshes along the Gulf Coast is thought to be the reason for this bountiful harvest of shrimp. This region also contributed 58 percent of the national oyster production.¹⁷ These “industries” harvesting from the sea are in massive decline all around the U.S. Coast but nowhere is the threat greater than in the Gulf.

The 8000 square mile dead zone of oxygen depleted (hypoxic) water in the Gulf of Mexico just off Louisiana is expanding daily due to toxic industrial flushing, petroleum drilling wastes, chemical run-off and dumping from so-called “Cancer Alley” in the Louisiana Bayou, and wetlands loss further depletes nutrients and feeds the dead zone.

“Clearly, in the Gulf Coast region, where the fossil-fuel industry is the biggest economic sector and where greenhouse-gas emissions are among the highest in the nation,” wrote the Union of Concerned Scientists in an 83-page report about the environmental problems in the Gulf region, “it is critical to find ways to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions without reducing the economic vitality of Gulf states.”

Examination of the massive UCS study, Confronting Climate Change in the Gulf Coast Region (2001) provides a clear example of where those perceived to be watchdogs for the public trust have sold out to big industry, “national security” and the defense of their own organizational and career interests.

There is not one word in the entire report about the extent of environmental devastation wrought by petroleum and defense interests, and almost nothing at all about chemical refineries.

Instead of calling for an immediate moratorium on gas-flaring—the single most important global source of devastating toxic gaseous emissions—the Union of Concerned Scientists points to the importance of “investment in the region’s substantial renewable energy resources (e.g., solar, wind, and biomass)” and “incentives for new technology development and economic diversification while reducing air pollutants and greenhouse gases.”

The Union of Concerned Scientists has offered a band-aid for a gangrenous (industrial) infection.

The UCS study's subtitle—"Prospects for Sustaining Our Ecological Heritage"—suggests that these scientists and the institutions they are part of are completely blind to the scale of the devastation, or merely unwilling to challenge the sacred cow of "national security" and its petroleum addictions.

How can we "sustain our ecological heritage" when it has nearly been obliterated?

Government Sanctioned Ecocide

The mighty Mississippi River has been channeled into hundreds of miles of concrete canals. There are Shell Oil Company refinery pipelines criss-crossing people's yards in Norco, Louisiana, an onshore oil lease within 40 miles of New Orleans.¹⁸ Conoco operations in Mossville, Louisiana caused massive deadly sulfur dioxide gas "spills" but the people were not told about them.¹⁹

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Departments of Environmental Protection have sanctioned hostile petroleum and gas operations killing wildlife, wetlands and people all over the Gulf.

Seismic testing blasts marine life with deadly sound and pressure waves, and these kill off elements of the food chain essential to the ecological health of wetland, coastal and undersea ecosystems.

Buzzing all over beneath the seas in the Gulf of Mexico are the ultra-state-of-the-art Unmanned (or Autonomous) Underwater Vehicles (UUVs or AUVs), an entirely new class of weaponry for the Pentagon, a new class of robotic machinery for offshore petroleum operations and seabed mining, a new classified "research" agenda for Woods Hole Oceanographic and Scripps Institute and their many affiliated "academic" institutions.²⁰

Eleven of the top twenty U.S. ports by cargo volume in 1999 are found in the Gulf Coast region, including New Orleans, Houston, Mobile, and Tampa. Port facilities located between the mouth of the Mississippi River and Baton Rouge handle over 230 million tons of cargo annually, valued at more than \$30 billion. The cargoes managed by these port facilities make up approximately 25 percent of the nation's total exported commodities.

Everything is couched in terms of profits and strategic resources, while the losses are shrouded in platitudes and corporate greenwash—funded and produced by the industries responsible for the destruction—peddling popsicle blue seas and coral reefs and sandy white shoals in Shell Oil, Lockheed Martin and Northrup Grumman advertisements.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems has been the prime contractor occupying the 832-acre NASA Michoud Assembly Facility in eastern New Orleans since 1973. Located some 24 miles from New Orleans International Airport and 15 miles from the French Quarter, the facility was

designated as a “superfund” pollution site in 1995 due to illegal disposal practices and accidents that contaminated Michoud’s soil, surface water, and groundwater with deadly trichloroethylene and other contaminant byproducts of space weaponry.

The Michoud facility includes extensive deepwater canals, port facilities and privatized channels linked to the Gulf and the Mississippi waterway, and they are currently seeking a major port expansion that will further usurp and destroy wetlands.

No money to help the people of New Orleans? Concerned about wetlands and the environment? The numbers speak for themselves.

In June 2002 NASA extended the Space Shuttle External Fuel Tank contract with Lockheed Martin Space Systems to September 2008 with a \$341 million addition to the original contract. On September 28, 2007, Northrup Grumman Ship Systems in New Orleans was awarded a \$13 million contract for the U.S. Navy’s LPD 17 Class Amphibious Transport Dock Ship Program. On June 23, 2007, the U. S. Army Tank Automotive Armaments Command awarded \$255.5 million for 369 *more* M1117 Armored Security vehicles (\$4 million added on October 9, 2007) to New Orleans-based Textron Marine & Land. And these don’t even scratch the surface on New Orleans-based defense contracts alone.

On December 3, 2007, the U.S. Department of the Interior concluded a deepwater oil and gas lease sale of \$281 million in new oil concessions in the Gulf of Mexico.²¹

Lockheed Martin has extensive research links with the University of New Orleans and others. The “core tenant” of the University’s \$162 million Research and Technology Park is the 400,000-square-foot Space and Naval Warfare Information Technology Center (SPAWARITC), which is affiliated with Lockheed Martin. SPAWAR is directly linked to “black programs” that have for years funded beyond top-secret military programs through contractors like Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

The Country Club of Privatized War

Northrup Grumman director Lewis Coleman is also director of the international “non-government” organization Conservation International and of the philanthropic Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The former (CI) is involved in defense, intelligence and mining projects in Central Africa and the Amazon, while the latter funds big industrial development agencies involved in undersea ventures (Woods Hole, Chemical Heritage Foundation) and, at the same time, many of the so-called “environmental” and “conservation” organizations involved in wetlands, oceans and other natural resource protection: World Wildlife Fund, Ocean Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, National Audubon Society, and Environmental Defense (Fund).

Northrup Grumman directors Ronald Sugar and Kevin W. Sharer are also directors of Chevron Corporation, another of the many petroleum majors deeply responsible for devastating the natural and social environments of the Gulf Coast.

Norman R. Augustine, Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Lockheed Martin Corporation, is also on the Advisory Council for the Department of Homeland Security. Lockheed Martin's Vice-President of Communications, Mary Jo Polidore is on the board of directors of United Way of Tarrant County (Texas), whose officers also include a Bell Helicopter/Textron executive.

Entergy Corporation director J. Wayne Leonard is a trustee of the United Way of Greater New Orleans. Entergy Louisiana, the state's largest utility, declared bankruptcy in September 2005, and thereby gained a government (taxpayers) bailout.²² Entergy Louisiana earned about \$168 million in 2004, while Entergy's overall revenues were \$2.4 billion in 2004. (Note: If corporations' subsidiaries incur losses they are transferred to taxpayers and ratepayers, but profits go straight to directors and shareholders.) Meanwhile, over two years after Katrina, electrical wires still dangle all around the Ninth Ward and Gentilly.

Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco appointed E. Renae Conley, the CEO of Entergy Louisiana, to the Board of Directors for the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF), established just after Katrina to fund "disaster relief." E. Renae Conley also serves on Louisiana's Cultural Economy Foundation Board and as a member of Governor Blanco's Advisory Commission for Coastal Restoration and Conservation.

LDRF director C. Berwick Duval, an attorney for the New Orleans law firm Duval, Funderburk, Sundbery, Lovell & Watkin, is also an executive director of the Coastal Conservation Association of Louisiana, the Bayou Chapter of Coastal Conservation Association, and the South Central Industrial Association.

Is this a perfect example of industrial expansion masking its devastating activities with a "conservation" front and profiting off misery and destruction through a "humanitarian" front like the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation?

The Duval law firm specializes in maritime law and counts as clients the Bollinger Shipyards, Fina Oil Company (Italy) and other maritime and petroleum sector firms, including Apache Operations, the second largest Gulf Coast petroleum leaseholder and operator.²³

There are twelve Bollinger "family-owned" shipyards in southern Louisiana, with five in the immediate New Orleans vicinity, and ten on the "panhandle" New Orleans peninsula. Like many Gulf Coast industrial giants, Bollinger facilities were literally built over the swamp. Bollinger Gulf Repair in East New Orleans by itself covers 58 acres with 3,300 feet of wet dock area.

Donald Bollinger served as a delegate to every Republican National Convention since 1976 and has served on the Republican National Finance Committee, the National Steering Committees for both Bush presidential administrations, and was the State of Louisiana's Finance Chairman for the George W. Bush for President Campaign and Campaign Chair for the General Election. He serves on the National Petroleum Council and previously served on the President's Export Council under the administration of President George H.W. Bush. He is Chairman of the Governor's Maritime Advisory Task Force, on the board of the Governor's Advisory

Commission on Military Affairs, and former Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans.

Blame Katrina, Blame the Victims

The selling off and destruction of Louisiana's wetlands and other environmental assets occurs today behind powerful business groups like those above. This is the classic modus operandi of the shock doctrine of disaster capitalism. It was not a sudden realization or awakening brought about by a hurricane, but an ongoing, simmering project that seized the moment it had been waiting for.

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that wrecked the Gulf Coast wetlands.

The wetlands that once protected the city of New Orleans from tropical storms have been obliterated and corporate industry and our now privatized government have accomplished an environmental—on top of the political—*coup d'etat* by blaming the problem on Mother Nature.

It was not a hurricane named Katrina that wrecked New Orleans. It was big oil, big industry and the big, everyday deceptions peddled by mass media and entertainment complex and consumed as news by the American people. Every square foot of wetlands that disappears from the Gulf Coast offers greater opportunities for the petroleum industry.

Petroleum companies have already set up rigs in other New Orleans communities and witnesses have seen people prospecting for oil in the Lower Ninth Ward. Like the people of New Orleans and rural Gulf Coast communities, the lingering wetlands are obstacles to more oil and more profit. It's not over, the remaining wetlands can be restored, recovery is possible, Mother Nature is our biggest ally, and hopelessness, denial and fear are our biggest enemies.~

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Baghdad on the Bayou Redux: Disaster Capitalism and the War on Equality

Part Two: New Oil Liens & the Sham of Peak Oil

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¹ See for example: keith harmon snow, “Darfurism, Uganda and the U.S. War in Africa,” Global Research, November 2007.

² See: Georgianne Nienaber, “Katrina Scattered People Instead of Bombs,” an interview with Tab Benoit, OP-ED News, December 3, 2007, <http://www.opednews.com/articles/opedne_georgian_071203_baghdad_on_the_bayou.htm>.

³ U.S. Navy Fact File, HSV SWIFT, http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=1400&ct=4

⁴ Alice Lipowicz, “FEMA uses Lockheed Martin facility for Katrina relief,” Washington Technology, September 2, 2005.

⁵ Stephanie J. Santos, “Recapturing 2005: A year of change for Fort Drum,” Blizzard Online, January 12, 2006, http://www.drum.army.mil/sites/postnews/blizzard/blizzard_archives/news.asp?id=8&issuedate=1-12-2006.

⁶ “United Way's Role in Hurricane Response and Recovery,” <http://www.unitedway.org/Katrina/index.cfm>

⁷ See: Broken Promises: 2 Years After Katrina, American Civil Liberties Union, August 2007.

⁸ Private interview, New Orleans, October 30, 2007.

⁹ <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/12/27/cemetery.scandal.suicide/index.html>
http://rawstory.com/news/2005/FEMA_outsources_Katrina_body_count_to_firm_implicated_in_bodydu_mping_scan_0913.html

¹⁰ <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/12/27/cemetery.scandal.suicide/index.html>

¹¹ Issues of executions, murders and mass graves will be examined in subsequent articles

¹² Anne Rolfes, Shell Games: Divide and Conquer the Diamond Community, The Concerned Citizens of Norco (LA) and Communities for a Better Environment, (circa 2001, 2002).

¹³ Northbound 35; Jeffrey Foucault

¹⁴ <http://www.crcl.org/>

¹⁵ “The American pitcher plants,” Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society, 34: 110–125; and “The Gulf Coast pitcher plant bogs,” American Scientist, 70: 260–267.

¹⁶ Holiday, M.C., and B.K. O’Bannon (2000). Fisheries of the United States, 1999. Current Fisheries Statistics No. 9900. Silver Spring, Md.: National Marine Fisheries Service.

¹⁷ Holiday, M.C., and B.K. O’Bannon (2000). Fisheries of the United States, 1999. Current Fisheries Statistics No. 9900. Silver Spring, Md.: National Marine Fisheries Service.) (56: Broutman, M.A., and D.L. Leonard (1988). The quality of shellfish growing waters in the Gulf of Mexico. Washington, D.C.: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Services

¹⁸ Anne Rolfes, Shell Games: Divide and Conquer the Diamond Community, The Concerned Citizens of Norco (LA) and Communities for a Better Environment, (circa 2001, 2002).

¹⁹ Louisiana Bucket Brigade, Birds of Prey: Conoco, Condea Vista, and PPG Feeding Off of Mossville and Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana Bucket Brigade, (circa 2001, 2002).

²⁰ The U.S. Navy Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (UUV) Master Plan, November 9, 2004, <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/technology/uuvmp.pdf>.

²¹ Press Release, “Western Gulf of Mexico Sale 204 Nets \$287,081,023 in High Bids,” Minerals Management Service, December 3, 2007, <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/homepg/whatsnew/newsreal/2007/071203a.pdf>

²² Entergy Corporation is running the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant beyond capacity and safety margins: in August 2007 an Entergy cooling tower collapsed spilling millions of gallons of radioactive water and causing Vermont Yankee to “scram”—leaving the water-cooled nuclear reactor dangerously close to a potential meltdown and nuclear explosion. See: Citizen’s Awareness Network, <www.nukebusters.org>.

²³ Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation: <http://duvallawfirm.com/representativeclients.asp>>. Apache Operations: <http://www.apachecorp.com/About_Us/Global_Strategy_and_Operations/Operations_Overview/United_States/>.