

## American Media: Culture of Fear

Reg Lee Ferguson  
Contributor

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans, Louisiana, is perhaps one of the greatest tragedies in the past 25 years. Comparable to the great earthquake of Bam, Iran on Dec. 26, 2003, where approximately 26,000 people died, or the infamous "Boxing Day" Tsunami exactly one year later where it is expected 275,000 people lost their lives (and even that count is still not complete).

If by now you are wondering how on earth I can compare the aftermath of Katrina to these terrible tragedies we're thinking on the same page. As terrible as the situation in New Orleans was and still is, it pales in comparison to the destruction and loss of lives of numerous catastrophes around the world. The waters in New Orleans will recede, the city will be rebuilt, and life will eventually return to normal in the historic Cajun city.

What of countries in Asia, like Bangladesh, where tens of thousands of people lost their lives and homes. Not only is this a terrible tragedy on the personal level, but on the national one as well. Those coastal people were a major contributor to the Agrarian economy of Bangladesh, and the same goes for all the countries affected by the Tsunami.

Regardless of the lack of food, water, and help in these impoverished nations the survivors managed to retain their humanity and lay bodies to rest, help the injured, and search for survivors.

The citizens of New Orleans have been reportedly pillaging, beating each other, raping the vulnerable (even children), and murdering one another. Even disaster relief comes under attack!

Why is this? How can the backbench of freedom, democracy,

and all that is good revert to such a primitive state?

This brings about a question that needs answering. What caused such anarchy? Has it ever occurred on such a scale anywhere else under the same relative circumstances? Using the U.S. administration and media for answers, one is led to believe that the delay in relief was the root cause. In fact "scientific evidence" suggests that after two days with no food, the human psyche reverts to irrational "primal" behaviour (a report in American papers).

I suppose Asians are from Mars, because after the Tsunami, and after the quake in Iran, they decided to help each other look for and treat survivors, as opposed to beating or killing them. Many remote areas were also left without any relief for multiple days, even weeks, yet no widespread reports of anarchy ever showed up on CNN.

One may argue that western social views and culture cannot be compared sociologically to the Eastern and Third worlds. Fair enough, in fact I'd agree. However why then was there no anarchy in Central Europe when floods devastated Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Switzerland, and Romania this past August? Even Canadian disasters like hurricane Juan, the 1998 Ontario and Quebec Ice storms (a perfect time for looting), or the B.C. forest fires of 2003, where hundreds of homes and thousands of people were evacuated from the Okanagan region. Where were the gunfights with police then?

Can you think of one thing that defines America from the rest of the world? Something that even Canada, almost a replica of American culture,

## It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood... Or Is It?



Inez Fitzpatrick  
Contributor

Since this new bus transit has been added to our wonderful city known as Charlottetown, it is the song that is ringing in many of our ears. Or perhaps I was unfortunate to hear someone actually sing the Mr. Rogers theme song as the Trolley pulled up in front of the W.A. Murphy building. What has happened? Has Mr. Roger's neighborhood been brought back from our blessed childhood days?

What makes this story interesting is that I was talking to a dear acquaintance that is moving to San Francisco. Suddenly I see the Trolley and think, "...or is she just moving down the street?"

There is a bit of controversy over this trolley idea. For one, it's got people reconnecting with their past – which is

great...innocence should be promoted. However, it's also got people raving about this U-Pass idea. Another \$60 could be added to your tuition payments. It's like the Sports Centre, we all pay the \$80 for the facility but how many of us actually get there? I am too busy writing up these columns to drag my rear over there. The only times I enter that building is to go insane while writing an exam.

So sure, we may use the Trolley to get downtown every so often, but why make it a mandatory fee if only a few of us actually use it? How about we conform to the ways of the Haligonians and make only students wanting to pay do so! Oh what a beautiful day in the neighborhood...



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