

LEFT BEHIND: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA FRAMES FROM NATIONAL  
TV JOURNALISTS COVERING HURRICANE KATRINA'S EVACUATION  
CENTERS

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By  
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the Thesis entitled:

LEFT BEHIND: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NEWS FRAMES FROM NATIONAL  
TV JOURNALISTS COVERING HURRICANE KATRINA'S EVACUATION  
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A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dedicated to my wife Carrie and my daughter Grace. “Go for it,” Carrie said nearly three years ago. I have done it sweetheart, and I praise God for you every day. Thank you for your tireless work to raise our two children Grace and Alyssa.

I also thank the evacuees of New Orleans. Their struggles, to this day, rightly diminish mine.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi

### Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Research Question	
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Theoretical Framework	
Narrative	
Disaster Reporting	
3. METHODOLOGY.....	13
Related Studies	
4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	22
Sunday August 28, 2005	
<i>NBC, ABC, CBS</i>	
Monday August 29, 2005	
<i>NBC, ABC, CBS</i>	
Tuesday August 30, 2005	
<i>NBC, ABC, CBS</i>	
Wednesday August 31, 2005	
<i>NBC, ABC, CBS</i>	

Thursday September 1, 2005

*NBC, ABC, CBS*

Friday September 2, 2005

*NBC, ABC, CBS*

Saturday September 3, 2005

*NBC, ABC, CBS*

Sunday September 4, 2005

*NBC, ABC, CBS*

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	46
Discussion of Research and Analysis	
<i>Similarities in coverage</i>	
<i>Differences in Coverage</i>	
Implications	
Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research	
APPENDIX	
1. EXAMPLE TABLE.....	57
2. EXAMPLE TRANSCRIPT.....	61
3. NUMBERS OF FRAMES EVIDENT.....	63
REFERENCES.....	64

## LIST OF TABLES

Table

1-1	Pan and Kosicki's Table.....	15
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ABSTRACT

Before and after Hurricane Katrina struck in the fall of 2005, journalists made vital decisions to report on life and death issues. Those decisions framed news coverage in ways, among others, that depicted conflict, human-interest, and a lack of responsibility from local, state, and federal government officials. This study examines those frames through the lens of framing theory using textual analysis.

The findings show five dominant frames appear in news coverage from nightly network news broadcasts before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina. Journalists included those frames because of socialized news routines and because of what is called a “what-a-story” model. Those frames are discussed and broken down on a sentence structure level in each story.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Nine-year-old Charles Evans spoke heartbreaking words to NBC's Campbell Brown about the federal government's response to conditions at the New Orleans Convention Center six days after Hurricane Katrina's landfall. "They say what they're going to do, but they are not doing anything for us to try to help us survive and live" (NBC News, 2005). Brown, in her own words, called Evans a "survivor" of Hurricane Katrina and of the "horrid" conditions at the New Orleans Convention Center. Together, their narrative made compelling television on NBC's Nightly News. And it framed NBC's coverage through presumptions of conflict, human-interest, and a breakdown in law and order.

This study examines those words and frames. It examines the on-air news content of national television broadcast stations before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005. The content comes from the half hour nightly news broadcasts of the three major broadcast networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. It analyzes broadcasts from Sunday, August 28, 2005, one day before Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana, to Sunday, September 4, 2005 when the military evacuated Superdome and the Convention Center. Specifically, the study uses a method called textual analysis to dissect national television news coverage of hurricane evacuees through framing and narratives in culture at the Louisiana Superdome, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport.

In all, nearly 9,000 people piled into the Superdome before the storm (Lauer, et al., 2005). Thousands more streamed to the Superdome with overflow to the Convention Center just after the storm passed. And days after the storm passed, Americans saw horrific images on national television of at least 35,000 people stranded by local, state, and federal government officials waiting for help to arrive (White House, 2006).

As the national media descended on New Orleans, the Superdome, the Convention Center, and the airport, journalists faced substantial challenges to cover the disaster staging areas. Management teams at news broadcast outlets made quick decisions not only to report but also to keep themselves out of harm's way. Those decisions led to on-air content that ultimately saved the lives of people stranded in New Orleans (*WWL-TV's Efforts*, 2005). The decisions also led to reporting that delivered information about evacuations, looting, and violent crime.

This study narrowly focuses on broadcast content that references three specific large staging areas for disaster evacuees – the Superdome, Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and the New Orleans International Airport. This will benefit those television decision makers in the future by providing textual analysis of content produced from large disaster staging areas during a confusing and scary time for evacuees and journalists alike. Journalists can look at this research in the future to realize what frames emerge from reporting about disaster staging areas and understanding the implications of different framing choices for stories. It could help journalists shape news coverage in the future to help people survive and comprehend how to proceed after a major disaster such as Hurricane Katrina.

## Research Question

This study seeks to answer one simple research question: What media frames emerged from national television reports about actions at the Superdome, and Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport, before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina?

This study examines how national Hurricane Katrina journalists encapsulated narrative storytelling and how they used and reused cultural story lines to frame the overall story of Hurricane Katrina for viewers. Specifically, the study will look for narratives about evacuees at the large staging areas and label those narratives within certain frames.

National newspaper and television coverage portrayed scenes inside the Superdome as from an “old biblical movie” (Treaster, 2005). The New York Times (2005) reported a woman

“...hearing a loud bang Tuesday afternoon as the body of a man slapped the concrete at the edge of the football field in a fatal suicidal plunge, after he apparently learned that his home had been destroyed. Others told of fights that broke out in food lines, and of a husband and wife who slugged each other in a wild argument. Several residents said they had heard of children being raped, though it was not clear whether anyone reported such incidents to the authorities, and no officials could be found who could confirm the accounts” (1).

As the situation worsened over subsequent days, a report came from NBC reporter Carl Quintanilla after wire service reports of gunfire in the Superdome. Quintanilla (2005) said, “The word again, according to wire services, is that they’re going to be having 100 military police go in and try to regain order of that Superdome where there are about 25,000 refugees” (NBC News Today Show).

The language used in both accounts from NBC News and the New York Times suggests unrest and incivility. It suggests the “refugees” inside the Superdome had resorted to violence with rapes and shooting, and those in power had rushed in to restore order. This type of language and narrative places national news coverage into frames necessary to research and dissect.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

This chapter reviews literature on framing theory. It also highlights how journalists use narratives to tell stories. Finally, the literature review covers how journalists tell stories during disasters and discusses the public's dependence on the media during disaster situations.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will employ framing theory as a lens to analyze news content. Before an explanation of specific frames, one must understand framing theory portrayed in culture as a theoretical framework for this study. Framing theory emerged, in part, from Erving Goffman, a sociologist. He said individuals label events with different “frameworks,” or “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman, 21). Framing, Goffman (1974) said, renders something meaningless from a scene and makes it meaningful (21). Goffman said journalists situate, perceive, recognize, and label events by applying schemata of interpretation (Eko, 277). Wodak and Meyer (2001) claim individual discourse comes from collective frames of perceptions (21). Those frames are especially important in media like television, newspapers, magazines, and radio. The media select content, organize it, produce, and reproduce story lines to fit certain deadlines, contexts, and formats (Miller and Ross, 245).

Scheuefle (1999) makes a vital distinction regarding framing (106). Since frames are necessary for both presenting and comprehending the news, Scheuefle (1999) identifies two concepts of framing: *media frames* and *individual frames* (106). *Individual frames* rely on one's personal ideas to guide how they process information (Entman,

1993, 53). *Media frames* allow journalists to identify, classify, and package information for their audience. Gamson (1993) describes a *media frame* as a “story angle or hook;” it is “the central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events and weaves a connection among them” (15).

Journalists, like all human beings, come from different social experiences. Journalists, in turn, write and speak the news from different points of view, “...which has the cumulative effect of emphasizing certain topics, themes, or events while de-emphasizing others” (McGarry, 3). Norris (1995) examined how network newscasts framed the Cold War. She said news themes change over time and said emphasis on a theme or issue could be determined by the number and length of stories and their order in a newscast (361).

A number of recent studies have focused on how news content is framed in crisis reporting (Baysha and Hallahan, 2000; Rogan, 2006; Neiger, 2004; Dimitrova, 2007; Li, 2005; Nossek and Berkowitz, 2006). These studies suggest frames in crisis reporting strongly influence the ways viewers make decisions based on the facts they see presented on the air. Baysha and Hallahan (2000) found a strong influence of ideology when Ukrainian news media framed the Ukrainian Political Crisis of 2001 in differing ways (233). Nimmo and Combs (1985) studied television coverage of the Three Mile Island Disaster. They discovered news, specifically television news, provides information. But it can also influence viewers to change their understanding of events as well as evoke emotions (46-47).

Both in crisis reporting and reporting in general, Valkenburg’s (1999) research says media frames are based on composing a news story to make it more accessible to a

higher cross-section of viewers (550). He says literature tends to point to at least four ways to frame the news: a conflict frame, a human-interest frame, a responsibility frame (i.e. who should be failure responsible for failure or success), and an economic consequences frame (551). This study also will look for storylines that follow a “law and order” frame. Based on the work of Anderson (1988) as she studied how journalists covered riot threats in El Salvador in 1979 and 1980, the law and order frame purports the disruption of social order is a common and reoccurring theme in news stories.

Anderson (1988) suggests:

Dramatic conflict, especially since it can be depicted visually, is exciting, and gains the attention of the viewer. That attention is held as the viewer becomes engaged in the unfolding crisis situation which will be resolved, in one way or another within the story” (243).

This study will look for those five specific frames as told through narrative structure.

### **Narrative**

By telling stories, journalists use narratives, to explain why events happen, how we act and respond, and what we value. Narratives mirror social truths, although not always an exact record of truth because they set aside room for particularity (Riessman, 1993; Mildorf 2004). On the most basic level in everyday life, people strive to make narratives comprehensive and well formed (Simner and Pickering, 226). Simner and Pickering (2004) go on to say “...if people wish to produce an utterance that will contribute to a coherent whole, they must monitor their own unfolding discourse” (227). Narrative, in turn, gives people voice for the mundane happenings of an ordinary day, and gives them an outlet for extraordinary events that mark our lives (Langellier, 243-244).

As discourse unfolds in everyday life, narratives help us understand how the “...illogical becomes logical and the disorderly becomes safe” (Barnett, 13). Wood (2001) suggested the following:

[N]arratives are sought with particular fervor when experience feels chaotic and seems not to make sense . . . When our experiences do not readily make sense, when chaos intrudes in our lives, we are compelled to find some way to generate coherence—or the illusion of it (242).

Journalists in our society are tasked to make sense of events when chaos disrupts our lives. They are narrative storytellers that put events in context within a frame.

Tuchman (1976) says a news report is a story. The news story, Tuchman (1976) said, “is a constructed reality possessing its own internal validity” (93). Journalists use narrative stories to “use and reuse...story lines that encapsulate the social and political conflicts of the day” (Hanson, 52). Comparatively, Nimmo and Combs (1985) say journalists, specifically television news journalists, are storytellers that make choices based on melodramas, or storylines (12).

Ultimately, the situation resolved around the Superdome and Convention Center in New Orleans because agents of law came in to take hold of a chaotic situation (Lauer, 2005). The media, including broadcast journalists, reported this. However, they believed the words of many public officials that repeated stories of rapes and murders in the Superdome. Journalists eventually determined there were not as many rapes as reported, gunfire didn’t ring out in the Superdome, and the death toll wasn’t as much as first thought (Chadwick, 2005). Yet those narratives put into frames made dramatic television. Within this study, textual analysis will pull out and categorize into frames those narratives spun by national journalists.



## **Disaster Reporting**

A review of literature shows many elements of decision making goes into putting content on the air during a disaster situation. News directors, managers, editors, and reporters, must make decisions based upon *organizational crises*. Organizational crises are events characterized by high consequences, low probability, ambiguity, and decision-making time pressure (Pearson & Clair, 59). Initial industry talk about Hurricane Katrina suggests newsrooms went into an *organizational crisis* mode to cover the story (Geisler, 2004). Previous research shows managers in organizational crises tend to under plan and overspend for what Hale, Dulek, and Hale (2005) call “triggering events.” Triggering events include natural and man-made disasters. Triggering events then spur a *Linear Crisis Communication Response Model*:

Following a triggering event, examined crisis response communication patterns can be described as initiated by *observation*, followed by *interpretation, choice*, and concluded with *dissemination*. (Hale, Dulek and Hale, 120).

The three researchers derived this model from personal interviews and secondary case studies with those executives and companies that experienced what they called organizational crises. They interviewed 26 executives and studied at least ten secondary sources to develop this model.

This model mainly describes response by newsroom managers, editors, and reporters to Hurricane Katrina. Each had to observe, interpret, and choose how to cover the community, state, and national response to the hurricane. Based on Berkowitz’s “what-a-story” model, one can see how those journalists relied on routine newsgathering techniques to typify and frame stories. Berkowitz says the a “what-a-story” is, “...the process of taking extraordinary occurrences and reporting on them in a way that makes

journalistic work appear competent to news media audiences” (129). Berkowitz claims, “much of what-a-story coverage is therefore typified as quite *expected* news” (130). Though he does not go into specific frames, he does model how journalists fall back into a routine of how to cover news stories.

As managers gathered facts about the disaster situations, they had to disseminate those facts to the respective crews. The crews also used what they saw in the field to put a product on the air, thus creating frames of what they saw.

A wealth of research shows the public relies on news media before, during, and after disaster situations to bring both immediate information and context to their lives.

Here, we use Fritz’s (1961) definition of a disaster as:

An event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society undergoes severe damage and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted, and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of a society prevented (Fritz, 655).

When those losses occur, media organizations are responsible for communicating essential information usually to a wide and heterogeneous population. And Seeger, et. al. (2003) say “The public seeks information to determine whether the crisis will affect them, how they should think, and what they should do” (71).

People pay attention because they want to know the next step. Perez-Lugo (2004) states the media, in the sociology of natural disasters, influence people’s preparedness response to natural disasters (210). Viewed in this way, newsroom managers must make decisions to put their own resources or tools (reporters, editors, producers, and cameramen) in harm’s way to help others bring context to a harmful and potentially dangerous situation.

Much of the current research suggests the media respond in four phases during a natural disaster. The “preparedness” phase suggests mass media provides facts about an approaching disaster and ways to prepare for its impact (Seydlitz, Williams, Laska, and Triche, 1990). For example, during a hurricane, a viewer can see a television report about evacuations and prepare him or herself to flee with others.

When a disaster strikes, media outlets are responsible for showing how people “respond” to the crisis. Throughout this second phase of disaster reporting, the media usually focus their attention on the most affected areas. After Hurricane Katrina slammed New Orleans, incessant reporting from the Crescent City showed the world how the U.S. government responded to the Superdome as people waited for helicopters to fly them out. Viewers saw dramatic television. This situation brought about emotional reporting. Black (1982) quotes a former executive editor of NBC News:

[The] highest power of television journalism is not in the transmission of information but in the transmission of experience... joy, sorrow, shock, fear; these are the stuff of news. (Black, 1982)

The ability to transmit those emotions during the response phase of a disaster gives television media a powerful tool.

The third phase of a journalist’s role during a disaster is the “recovery” phase. It is a news organization’s job to report on accurate facts about how people can recover from natural disasters. This includes communicating with and receiving from local, state, and federal government and Red Cross officials to tell people how and where to go for help after the storm. A study by Perez-Lugo (2004) argues there is more to this phase. She says media provide a “social utility” companionship function during the recovery phase of the storm (210). One can see this play out in research. A study by Dominick

(1996) showed people keep the TV on to overcome loneliness after a disaster. In the findings section of this paper, the reader can see this exact situation as it unfolded during Hurricane Katrina.

Finally, journalists must educate people how to respond to future disasters. Research explains this as the “mitigation” phase. During the longer “mitigation” phase, the media provide information about disasters in other parts of the world. This helps communities raise disaster awareness and prepare for future events (Rodriguez, 1997 & Quarantelli, 1996).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

To determine what frames and narratives emerge from disaster reporting on Hurricane Katrina, this study used a technique called textual analysis. Analyzing the rhetoric and words of journalists, textual analysis allows a close study of the way journalists thought about the disaster in their minds, and then disseminated those thoughts to the public.

Textual analysis, also known as discourse analysis, is a method to critically examine cultural artifacts or texts to establish meaning. Van Dijk (1991) says both discourse analysts and ordinary language users are primarily interested in meaning: “what is this text or talk about, what does it mean, and what implications does it have for language users” (111-112). Textual analysis is an interpretive method. It allows researchers to consider all aspects of content, including omissions (Hall, 1975). By linking the conditions of production to the analysis of content, the researcher can also see evidence of institutional and professional constraints on the text.

Textual analysis emerged between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s and became more or less accepted as an alternative or addition to classical content analyses (van Dijk, 108-109). Noted discourse researcher Teun van Dijk (1991) argues “there is probably no other discursive practice, besides everyday conversation, that is engaged in so frequently and by so many people as news in the press and on television” (108, 109). The media certainly reported about the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Therefore, a discourse or textual analysis of media content is indeed warranted.

Through textual analysis by looking at scripts rather than actual video, I was able to remove myself from viewing graphics, video, hair, makeup, and typography that may have distracted from the true meaning of the text at hand. A visual analysis may have been warranted for a content analysis, but I felt I had to go deeper by looking at the meaning of the text with as little visual distraction as possible. This allowed a truer and more focused study of metaphors, exemplars, and rhetoric; all key elements of a textual analysis, as I will describe below.

In the study, I compiled national news transcripts from the Lexis-Nexis academic database. Those transcripts were narrowed to solely include details of evacuees at the Superdome and Ernest P. Morial Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport one week after Hurricane Katrina.

I chose to narrowly focus the research based upon the massive amount of coverage from Hurricane Katrina. The scripts from the evacuation centers present a perfect opportunity to study the pain, heartache, and conflict from the week. They also served as the important focus centers for journalists. I acknowledge more text is evident from the nightly news broadcasts, however, the percentage of the evacuation center coverage (about 30 percent on each nightly news broadcast for the week) still provides a great opportunity to show future decision makers how journalists frame coverage from large disaster areas where many people are affected and congregated.

I used Vanderbilt University's Television News Archive database to crosscheck the outlines of the stories for authenticity. I analyzed content from national news organizations NBC, CBS, ABC. The text came from a period of seven days before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina's impact on New Orleans (August 28-September 4,

2005). This allowed the text to center around New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin's order to evacuate last minute evacuees to the Superdome. The content moved through the actual hurricane's impact to the eventual evacuation of the Convention Center and Superdome.

Using textual analysis, I defined the text, closely read the text, and interpreted findings (Duffy, 1). The text includes each news story that contains the words "Superdome," "Convention Center," and "New Orleans International Airport." The first step of defining the text for this project compiles short descriptions or headlines of the content seen in the transcripts. This is part of what van Dijk (1991) calls "macro-structure." Short descriptions or taglines (usually found in the headline/lead line of the story) helped to analyze the text because they define the most important information involved in the story (van Dijk, 113).

It is also important to understand rhetorical structure as a key element in textual analysis research. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) identify metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images. Pan and Kosicki (1993) say journalists use those rhetorical devices to "...invoke images, increase salience of a point, and increase vividness of a report" (62).

The next step of textual analysis includes closely reading the text. In this study, the researcher must "read" by looking at scripts. This is where systematic textual analysis must carefully be employed. The study will follow and categorize content based on van Dijk's (1991) "superstructure" schema. Van Dijk (1991) says: "Just like stories or argumentations, news reports follow a hierarchical schema, consisting of such conventional categories as **Headline**, **Lead** (together forming the **Summary**), **Main**

Events, Context, History (together forming the Background category), Verbal Reactions, and Comments” (114).

Pan and Kosicki (1993) utilize an important method to break down news stories for discourse analysis. They rely on van Dijk’s “macro structure” for identification of story taglines but provide a way to break stories into “micro-units“ (64). This helps researchers identify elements of the script, as well as syntactical, thematic, and rhetorical structures (see table 1-1).

Table 1-1  
Pan and Kosicki’s Example Table for Structural Elements of the Story

Sentence(s)	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Theme	Rhetoric
1	Hurricane Katrina threatens the Gulf of Mexico	Lead Paragraph	Actor, Action, Setting	Hurricane Katrina poses a threat	“Unleash her fury” modifier of the actor
2	Katrina could be one of worst storms in U.S. History	Lead Paragraph	Actor, Context	Katrina is bad and historical storm	
3-5	Katrina is a dangerous category 5 Storm with winds at 175 miles per hour. More than 1 million people ordered to evacuate.	Supporting Paragraph	Actor, Background	Sub-theme 1: Katrina’s strong power is characterized by the intensity of winds, the category of the storm, and the amount of people forced to evacuate	Quantification, “Category 5, 175 Miles per hour, 1 million
6-7	The broadcast will cover different	Supporting Paragraph	Actor, Context		“Track of the storm,” catchphrase.



	geographic locations, the track of the storm, and the impact on gas prices.				
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A close reading of the text must also highlight textual devices like similes, and themes (Duffy, 1). This schema will make interpretation more coherent and fluent (see Appendix 1).

The last step includes interpretation of findings. This is where important elements of societal structure must make their way into analysis. First, one must understand language users interpret various social structures through what van Dijk (1991) calls *scripts*. van Dijk (1991) says, “Scripts are culturally shared, conventional knowledge representations about well-known episodes of social life” (117). Journalists who talked about Hurricane Katrina used various societal scripts they derived from general social knowledge.

I also examined the connection between the textual elements and the societal structure at the time in order to determine the frames journalists used to describe the disaster. I also examined narratives and scripts already ascribed to social knowledge New Orleans.

I interpreted findings from each successive day of coverage. For example, the interpretation started with media coverage of Mayor Ray Nagin’s August 28<sup>th</sup> speech, to when the last evacuee leaves the Superdome on September 4, 2005.

## **Related Studies**

Researchers have undertaken many qualitative analyses of the media of disaster situations. The foremost in comparison with the proposed study comes from Reynolds and Barnett's (2002) framing analysis of September 11<sup>th</sup> coverage from CNN. The study looked at the first 12 hours of CNN's breaking news coverage and suggests that CNN created a strong frame that argued, "that the events of September 11 comprised an act of war so horrific that immediate military retaliation was not only justified but necessary" (Reynolds and Barnett, 2).

The CNN inquiry closely mirrors the proposed study because of the disaster topic and methodology. It will be useful because it studies CNN's content in the context of breaking news. Reynolds and Barnett (2002) say, "...breaking news fundamentally alters the traditional process of reporting by changing the routines that journalists follow" (6). They argue fairness, balance, and accuracy are rendered somewhat moot during breaking news situations in order to become the first to break a story or provide new information (Reynolds and Barnett, 6).

The researchers studied videotape text through both audio and video. This includes spoken words by the reporter and subjects, music, graphics, and video. The researchers created a master transcript by downloading breaking news and special event transcripts from Lexis. To ensure accuracy, the entire printed transcript was compared to 12 hours of televised coverage and the researchers did not find an error. They also transcribed every graphic that appeared on the screen for a complete picture of what was seen on screen as they read or evaluated any word or phrase. The two worked for six weeks, and each logged six hours of video.

As for interpretation, Reynolds and Barnett (2002) looked for keywords that emerged from the text like “horrible,” “horrendous,” and “disturbing” to name a few (11). They then noticed the keywords became increasingly important when put into sentences. For example, “war” became a word in different sentences that created different ideas. They argue the journalists heard the word “war” used by their sources and started questioning others about an “act of war” declared by the terrorists, the U.S. government, or U.S. Citizens (Reynolds and Barnett, 11). Reynolds and Barnett did not include the review of textual “superstructure” as proposed in this researcher’s study. They mainly focused on keywords and sentences to form their textual interpretations.

Another comparative study in terms of disaster situations situation is Kim and Lee’s (2003) textual analysis of journalistic coverage from the 1997 Korean Air crash in Guam. Flight 801 went down August 6<sup>th</sup> of that year in the U.S. territory killing 228 passengers and crew. This study specifically focuses on-air disaster reporting, however, some of their techniques are useful for textual analysis. The study wanted to see how Korean and United States journalists framed two divergent crash causes – “pilot error vs. inhibition of conflict devices” – and what helped them construct their news frames (Kim and Lee, 7). The researchers analyzed “text” from United States media outlets *NBC News* and the *New York Times* as well as Korean outlets *KBS News* and *JoongAng Ilbo*.

Kim and Lee (2003) do not focus on keywords and small sentences like Reynolds and Barnett (2002). Instead, they analyze full sections or paragraphs from the respective media outlets. They interpret two sections of speech from the *New York Times* and *NBC* to *KBS* by saying, “In a stark contrast to the *New York Times* article and *NBC Nightly News* report, *KBS News at 9* on August 6 linked the crash to poor airport conflict

devices” (Kim and Lee, 11). The researchers intertwined facts later revealed from government and other reputable investigations into their analysis of media coverage at the time.

Another useful study is that by Butt, Lukin, and Matthiessen (2004) who analyzed President George W. Bush’s first speech after 9/11 and British Lieutenant Colonel Tim Collins exhortation of his troops before going to war with Iraq in 2003. This is a useful case study in textual analysis because the researchers connect speeches that call humans to “abhorrent behavior” to two different contexts.

To guide an understanding of textual analysis further, I examined Kumar’s (2005) study of the 1997 Nationwide UPS strike. Kumar (2005) analyzed 269 news reports from ABC, CBS, and NBC and argued: “Television coverage of this strike...failed to reflect the class nature of this conflict” (131). Kumar (2005) came to this conclusion many ways and argued for a “nationalist narrative,” but for this researcher, his analysis of “absence” will be an imperative resource for future study.

In a clear example of “absence,” Kumar (2005) references a story that juxtaposes a striking UPS worker with a UPS Customer:

*Ray Brady:* The noose is tightening around UPS customers. In Connecticut, Susan Laing is closing her Postal Center USA, going out of business.

*Susan Laing:* Two weeks ago everything was fine. I had an income. And suddenly, now I don’t have an income. I have no UPS.

*Brady:* And in Orlando, the noose is tightening around Teamsters Local 385.

*Unidentified Woman No. 1:* And the members are beginning to call and say, “There’s no paycheck and my baby needs food.” *Brady:* So the local has set up a food bank for the strikers feeling the pinch.

*Unidentified Woman No. 2:* I’m trying to get my two—two grandchildren through school, feed them, and clothe them. What am I supposed to do (141)?

Kumar (2005) says the combination of the two stories was unnecessary (141). That is because the author of the text left out the point of view that, for the Teamsters' Union, a strike is a good thing to negotiate a better contract. Kumar (2005) goes on to point out how absence fits into a nationalist narrative.

That is the same technique this study follows. I reviewed and analyzed a section of text, looked for absence or what is left out of the text, and then determined the frame for the coverage.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results and Findings

Once again, this study seeks to answer the following research question:

R1: What media frames emerge from national television reports about actions at the Superdome, and Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport, before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina?

The following analysis looks solely at those stories that talk about the Superdome, Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport in the script. It looks to identify any of five frames in each story analyzed. Those frames, once again, are conflict, human-interest, law and order, economic consequences, and responsibility.

#### **Sunday, August 28, 2005**

Warnings and descriptions of Hurricane Katrina's potential impact marked coverage from Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>. At broadcast time for all three networks, Hurricane Katrina had not made landfall yet. The three broadcasts all shared conflict as a major frame. Responsibility also showed up as minor frames in coverage. Stories from all three broadcasts briefly mentioned the Superdome.

#### **NBC**

NBC reporter Martin Savidge highlighted evacuation orders in his story titled "Katrina Evacuation Preparations." Savidge, as the major theme in his story, reported the City of New Orleans was in severe jeopardy. He showed this through various sub-themes in his script, showing the mayor and president giving warnings to evacuate. Savidge also sprinkled in a metaphor comparing floodwaters to a "toxic gumbo" that could pose a serious health threat. Through a depiction of a "doomsday scenario,"

various sound bites from those in charge, and quotations from those looking to leave New Orleans, Savidge framed his story through conflict and responsibility.

As for the Superdome, Savidge reported the Superdome began to fill with sheltered but frustrated evacuees. This was the beginning of a conflict frame reported from the Superdome evident throughout the rest of the coverage from NBC during the week.

### **ABC**

ABC's coverage came from anchor Dan Harris and reporter Jeffrey Kofman. Their story, much like NBC and CBS, previewed the potentially devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina. Conflict was a major theme throughout ABC's story, titled "Hurricane Katrina Category Five Storm to Hit New Orleans." Textual Analysis revealed a theme throughout the story that showed Hurricane Katrina posed a severe danger to people's safety in New Orleans. A depiction of residents fleeing for safety helped Kofman show the serious nature of the storm's potential impact. He used a visual image of 17 people cramming into a car to drive home that point. Kofman also included catchphrases like "a city under siege" and a source's catchphrase, "haul ass and get out of here." That, in addition to a metaphor comparing New Orleans to a cereal bowl drew attention to the potential devastation the storm could bring upon the city. Various sub-themes throughout the script included Mayor Nagin's and President Bush's pronouncements to evacuate for safety.

Kofman mentioned the Superdome at the end of his script much like NBC. He dubbed it "a shelter of last resort." He too, noted a hint of conflict, depicting people waiting in line for long hours to get into the Superdome.

## CBS

John Roberts and Mark Strassman framed their coverage through conflict as well. All three networks shared a simple and mostly similar theme on this Sunday that showed Hurricane Katrina posed a major threat to New Orleans. “The clock is ticking,” declared Roberts in the lead paragraph of the story. The immediacy of the catchphrase urged people to “heed the mayor’s order for a mandatory evacuation.” Roberts used quantification as a depiction showing Hurricane Katrina had winds of 165 miles per hour also dubbing it a “dangerous Category 5 storm.” Reporter Mark Strassman, in the body of his story, depicted “panicky people” at gas stations as they fled the city.

Strassman mentioned the Superdome in one of the last supporting paragraphs of his story. He, too, depicted the Superdome as “a shelter of last resort.”

## **Monday, August 29, 2005**

Hurricane Katrina, the storm itself, had come and gone through New Orleans by broadcast time. It jogged slightly to the east sparing a direct hit on the Big Easy. Reporters began to focus their attention more on the Superdome. The Convention Center and airport were not yet reported as large evacuation centers. Conflict still reigned as a major theme on Monday from all three networks, yet networks began to frame their coverage talking about law and order as well.

## NBC

NBC mentioned the Superdome in two stories on this Monday. First, the facility got a headline mention from Brian Williams. He used the catchphrase “raising the roof” to show how Katrina ripped parts of the roof off the Superdome. He also dubbed the



9,000 people inside “refugees.” This framed the story in terms of a conflict for those still on the inside.

NBC’s second story gave a first person perspective of life inside the Superdome from Brian Williams. His story, titled “Superdome took damage, sheltered 9,000 during storm,” once again framed conflict of man versus nature. Williams used exemplars to introduce his story, saying the Superdome housed a pope and half a dozen Super Bowls, but never a big hurricane. Immediately, in the sixth sentence of his story, Williams established a sub-theme of leaking problems in the Superdome. He also introduced us to a man who came for shelter because he couldn’t leave New Orleans due to traffic.

Williams used a metaphor in his second paragraph of the story comparing the sound of the Hurricane to a New York City subway train. He then used a simile to describe the turf on the inside of the Superdome as wet as it would have been outdoors. Rumbblings of conflict influenced a sub-theme that shelter evacuees began to get frustrated with the way authorities treated them inside the Superdome. Williams concluded his story by showing signs of conflict. He noted the first signs of restlessness from evacuees inside the Superdome and told about exacerbating conditions like military meals, aroma problems, and the lack of electricity to depict a worsening situation. NBC provided the most concentrated coverage of the Superdome on Monday, August 29, 2005.

### **ABC**

ABC provided much less perspective on events at the Superdome in its story titled “Hurricane Katrina’s Impact.” Reporter Jeffrey Kofman briefly mentioned concerns that Katrina might rip the roof from the Superdome. This came in the first paragraph of his

story. Kofman then moved onto Katrina's damage throughout New Orleans. He talked about damage to physical structures and minor flooding in some parts of the city.

Another sub-theme of his story showed that Katrina did not do as much damage as first thought. Later in his story he talked about looters to show the first signs of a law and order frame.

It was only after Kofman's taped story that viewers learned about Katrina's actual impact on the Superdome. Charles Gibson's concluding paragraph used metaphors, much like Brian Williams from NBC, comparing the sound of Hurricane Katrina's impact on the structure to a tin can opened by a can opener. Gibson mentioned the roof held but not before scaring the people inside and forcing them to find higher drier ground among the seats of the Superdome. Coverage throughout this story warrants a frame of conflict. The reporters only mention physical damage to the structure, not the rumblings of discontent reported by NBC and CBS.

### **CBS**

CBS mentioned the Superdome in two stories. First, Bob Schieffer depicted New Orleans as a "flooded ghost town" in the headlines to open the broadcast. That's important because he noted most left town while others spent the night at the Superdome.

In CBS' second story, reporter Lee Cowan framed his story around evacuee conflict inside the Superdome. Cowan focused mainly on the physical structure and its impact on the evacuees. He used quantification as a depiction, showing 9,000 people sheltered from the storm. He depicted those people as hungry, wet, tired, and thankful. Cowan said many people came to the Superdome because they were too old, poor, or sick to leave the city.

A sub-theme emerged toward the middle of Cowan's story showing the Superdome structure beginning to fail. He played on this sub-theme with an exemplar and catchphrase, showing the roof about 300 feet above him leaking saying "Katrina had found her way in." Cowan ended his piece with a metaphor, saying evacuees were "a new kind of 'Saint'" inside this NFL stadium. Throughout the story, he showed the physical structure threatened the safety of the evacuees on the inside, therefore a frame of conflict is indeed warranted.

### **Tuesday, August 30, 2005**

Contradicting initial reports, floodwaters began to move into the city of New Orleans Tuesday; submerging houses, cars, and bodies. Coverage shifted toward rescues in the community. The networks mentioned the Superdome once again in stories, and frames of conflict and law and order began to take place.

#### **NBC**

NBC gave only a cursory mention of the Superdome at the introduction of its broadcast. Brian Williams mentioned he was standing in front of the Superdome and said, "we can all see how sandblasted the roof looks from the storm." It is difficult to analyze how NBC framed its coverage of the Superdome on this day. Much of the broadcast devoted time to other parts of the Gulf Coast. Other stories mentioned breakdowns in law and order around the city of New Orleans and rescues from rooftops, but none mentioned the Superdome.

#### **ABC**

ABC mentioned the Superdome in two stories. Yet, ABC focused on other parts of New Orleans than the Superdome in the first of the two stories. The major theme of the story was that New Orleans was underwater. The Superdome was mentioned as a central rallying point for those evacuees, but reporter Jeffrey Kofman focused much of the story's attention to looting and a breakdown in law and order elsewhere in the city. Kofman depicted most neighborhoods in "pure anarchy." When he did mention the Superdome, he suggested as a sub-theme that it was the only high ground evacuation point left in the city. Once again, conflict was a common frame for those folks headed to the Superdome.

ABC Reporter Steve Osusnami framed the second story around Economic Consequences for the poor people of New Orleans. The theme of his story suggested natural disasters affect poor people the most. "The ones that have the least seem like they're hit harder than anything else," he suggested in a catchphrase. One of his sub-themes pointed out that many poor people went to the Superdome because of their lack of resources to get out of the city. He showed how the evacuees would have a hard time with healthcare. This story clearly framed economic consequences, although it did not have the Superdome as the central focus.

### **CBS**

CBS focused the theme of its story on the flooding consequences around New Orleans. John Roberts metaphorically described rooftops as "fragile islands" and used a visual image of flooding to depict an "apocalyptic scene." He used quantification as a depiction, saying 80 percent of New Orleans was underwater. He also said, "officials are overwhelmed by the scope of the disaster." Toward the middle of the story Roberts

mentioned the Superdome. He said it would have to be evacuated due to flooding concerns. Once again, CBS framed this story on the conflict of residents in New Orleans.

### **Wednesday, August 31, 2005**

Desperation set in for many people in New Orleans on Wednesday. Water, by now, completely covered the streets. People made signs to call for rescue from their rooftops. All three networks mentioned the Superdome on this day. Major frames included conflict, responsibility, and law and order, as those stranded started to call on any government officials for help.

#### **NBC**

NBC referenced the Superdome in two stories. The first came from Brian Williams in the open of the broadcast. He said, “Floodwaters paralyze New Orleans as officials move to evacuate everyone still in the city, including 20,000 people in the Superdome.” The number had now risen. It was a depiction, once again, using quantification. His metaphor showing the floodwaters paralyzed New Orleans highlighted a desperate situation. This frame of conflict showed the floodwaters against those trying to evacuate the city. It also set up a frame of responsibility for the rest of the broadcast because officials were trying to evacuate the city.

NBC’s second story, “Hundreds or more may be dead in New Orleans due to flooding,” mentioned the Superdome and used three major frames in the story; conflict, law and order, and responsibility. The theme of the story centered on the fight to survive in New Orleans. Martin Savidge’s clear depiction of that fight for survival referred to thousands of people roaming the streets in a mass migration. An interviewee first mentioned the Superdome in the seventh sentence of the story. He said, “They told us go

to the Superdome. If you want to be rescued, go to the Superdome. All of a sudden, now they're telling us go to the bridge. We have very few resources.” This depicted a clear lack of responsibility and a lack of information. Another woman said the cops forgot about the people in New Orleans.

Again, mentioning the Superdome, Savidge used a catchphrase saying, “the shelter of last resort is the last place anybody wants to be.” This framed conflict inside the Superdome. He further supported the point, saying, “the air has gone bad, the toilets are overflowing, and tensions are rising among rival gang members inside.” This breakdown in social order also framed the story through a law and order perspective. He showed a frame of responsibility when he mentioned people being loaded onto busses. He mentioned, “...state officials are now evacuating the evacuees.” Yet there is no mention of any failure of officials to do their jobs at least from the reporter’s perspective.

### **ABC**

One story from ABC mentions the Superdome and this story is framed much the same way as NBC with conflict, law and order, and responsibility. The central theme of ABC’s story on this day said New Orleans was a city under desperation. It’s about three-fourths of the way through the story that reporter Bob Woodruff mentioned the Superdome. He quantified the number of those stranded inside as 20,000. One of his sub-themes showed the situation as desperate inside the structure. He mentioned help was on the way to move the people to the Astrodome in Houston.

Woodruff framed conflict inside the Superdome, and showed it surrounded by water. He also included sound bites from Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco when she promised help was on the way. This inclusion of her thoughts as well as four other

officials showed a frame of responsibility for those inside the Superdome. It showed the reporter deemed it necessary to include those in charge inside his story to hold them accountable.

Finally, toward the end of his story, Woodruff depicted looting as widespread in the poor communities. He even asked a looter if it was okay to steal things in this situation. This mention of looting framed the story around a breakdown in law and order.

### **CBS**

CBS reporter Lee Cowan framed his story, “Hurricane Survivors in New Orleans coping with the Aftermath of Katrina,” around the human-interest of evacuees. Evidence of conflict frames showed up as well. The theme of his story said the survivors were waiting in pain and desperation for help to come. On a personal note, I vividly remember watching this story on the day it aired, when Lee Cowan focused on a group of evacuees on a highway overpass. I realized then, what a massive and tragic situation Hurricane Katrina created.

Cowan began his piece with a strong human-interest frame. He used metaphors to show a “makeshift neighborhood” on the top of a bridge, and told how a man named Alfred Bryan led him through a “maze of human suffering.” Bryan revealed little babies on the bridge and showed Cowan a woman in labor. Another woman on the bridge showed Cowan how a man jumped from the bridge to end his life. Cowan depicted the setting as “a shantytown like no other.” A frame of conflict is extremely evident in this text.

All this setup is important because Cowan then revealed a visual image of the Superdome just beyond the bridge. He said those on the bridge were the ones “that just

couldn't make it to the New Orleans Superdome.” “It's actually just right over there,” he said referring to the structure. “But to get there, these people would have to swim.”

He then drove to the Superdome to show the first evacuations of the sick and elderly. “Inside, there were plenty more waiting to go, somewhere, anywhere,” he said. He then depicted those inside the Superdome as “the lucky ones” compared to the ones on the bridge. This frame of human-interest was extremely powerful to show the massive suffering people went through after the disaster. It was a little slice of life to show a bigger picture of the entire disaster.

#### **Thursday, September 1, 2005**

Thursday, all three networks began to mention the Convention Center as a rallying point for evacuees. Desperation, not only for evacuees but also for journalists, prompts calls for help from local, state, and federal government officials.

#### **NBC**

NBC provided two stories referring to the Superdome and Convention Center on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. In his first sentence of the opening headlines of the broadcast, Brian Williams showed a theme that New Orleans descended into further chaos. There is strong evidence of conflict, responsibility, and law and order frames in the first story. A sub-theme of Williams' introduction told about “New Orleans residents asking people in Washington, Are you watching, are you listening?” This frames the story based upon responsibility, or a lack thereof.

He uses quantification as a depiction again showing 15,000 “refugees” stranded in the New Orleans Convention Center. He said, “there is looting, there is shooting,”



referring to the rest of New Orleans. And he referenced the mayor's desperate call for an "S.O.S."

Reporter Don Teague picked up the coverage depicting mostly poor and black New Orleans residents waiting to evacuate from the Superdome and Convention Center. He showed how buses began to pick people up when gunfire rang out halting the evacuations. He mentioned widespread looting and a police lieutenant telling NBC News that no one is in charge. This framed the story from a law and order perspective.

Martin Savidge focused his story entirely on the Convention Center. The theme of his story said many people were stranded at the Convention Center. Many, he said, thought they would die. His story framed the crisis through responsibility and conflict. Throughout the story he used visual images of a woman suffering from a lack of heart medication. He showed that some people already died. Frames of a lack of responsibility and a breakdown of law and order were apparent in sentences 17-21 of his story. "Looted alcohol, heat and frustration, tempers flaring, and with no police here, they have to settle disputes themselves. Finally, when an officer does appear, he only honks his horn to clear a path," he said. He continued to show looting and people suffering. To close his story, he said, "These are scenes other worldly."

### **ABC**

ABC depicted 100,000 people inside the city of New Orleans with no way out. Reporter Bob Woodruff said people inside the Superdome made their way outside to wait for busses that never came. He used a visual image of the elderly and infants without formula waiting in the heat for busses to arrive. The conflict frame here showed people fighting the elements to stay alive.

Woodruff then used a catchphrase from a source characterizing the situation as a “madhouse.” In a clear breakdown of law and order he used a visual image of National Guard troops hiding behind trees in fear of snipers of frustrated citizens. He supported this in an interview with a National Guardsman saying one of his soldiers was shot in the leg during a fight. He said ambulances halted their evacuations from the Superdome because of the threat of gunfire. Another clear indication of a law and order frame came when Savidge said, “Late today, National Guard troops and supplies made their way to the Superdome to try to restore order.”

Reporter David Muir told his story from the Convention Center. He used quantification as a depiction saying 20,000 people were waiting at the Convention Center waiting to be rescued. He set up conflict in the first paragraph of his story, showing people stealing from each other to survive. Muir then reported, “Police say there have been rapes and beatings, and now, people here are dying.” This is another clear frame of law and order.

He then moved to a responsibility frame saying, “We couldn't find anyone in charge here.” He continued that theme through the rest of the story showing sources asking for busses to evacuate people. Overall, ABC framed its coverage through two major themes: law and order and conflict

## CBS

CBS, in the first paragraph of its story, depicted a bit of good news from the “hell-hole that was once the Louisiana Superdome.” Bob Schieffer reported that busses evacuated thousands of people from the structure to the Astrodome in Houston. Yet Schieffer also reported the city of New Orleans was still in “anarchy.” This law and order frame showed looting and people shooting at rescue helicopters. Reporter John Roberts moved into the body of the story showing many people leaving the Superdome happy to get out.

Yet he mentioned the lack of organization among relief efforts. He interviewed a man who used a visual image of a three-week-old baby without water and formula. He said, “...and they want us to survive out here. Where's FEMA? Where's the mayor?” This moved the story into a frame of responsibility. Through the rest of the piece, Roberts moved back and forth through frames of law and order and responsibility showing rescues at the Superdome had to stop because people demanded rides out at gunpoint. A clear depiction of conflict came in the concluding sentences of Roberts’ story. He said a man’s life, going to be rescued at the Convention Center, “...was about to go from bad to worse.” This was unique for a reporter to editorialize in the story, but it was clearly evident from the previous paragraphs it would most likely be a true case.

### **Friday, September 2, 2005**

Help began to arrive en masse from the federal government on Friday. The first National Guard troops started to arrive. A major frame from all three networks centered on responsibility. The language from reporters and anchors on this day showed the extreme anxiety of evacuees mixed with a lack of help from those in charge.

## NBC

NBC provided three stories mentioning large disaster areas. The first story looked at evacuations at the Superdome and Convention Center. Anchor Brian Williams' rhetoric included a catchphrase, saying the busses on the way were "long-awaited." Still, he said, it could be days before other evacuees have a chance to "escape." This depiction set up a conflict frame between the people and the elements in New Orleans. Reporter Don Teague continued the same story with a frame around the responsibility of the local and federal government officials in charge to get people out of New Orleans.

Teague mentioned how National Guard convoys moved into the center of the city and how they were tasked with ending the violence and evacuating the Superdome and Convention Center. Furthermore, he included a sound bite from New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin verbally chastising the federal government for its lack of support. Nagin responded to the federal government's promise to send troops saying, "They're not here. It's too doggone late. Now, get off your...(censored by network)...and let's do something, and let's fix the biggest...(censored by network)...crisis in the history of this country."

To close the story, Teague included a nurse's reaction to the crisis as she said, "It's totally crazy. We feel totally abandoned by the government." This clear responsibility frame continued when Teague capped the story, saying, "All of them asking the same question: How could this happen in America?"

NBC's second story from reporter Carl Quintanilla framed the situation at the Convention Center with conflict and responsibility as well. The reporter put himself in a unique situation by looking for rescuers personally. Brian Williams introduced his piece,

saying Carl Quintanilla, "...who like the rest of us was wondering where the rescuers were..." went to find them.

Quintanilla used exemplars to show his crew's supplies were delivered, and that the roads were passable within ten minutes. He framed his story around a search for responsibility. He showed conflict throughout the story by including visual images of those using weapons to board busses. And then he asked three-star General Russell Honore, just what's taken so long? Honore responded, depicting "This is a disaster. This isn't something somebody can control." Quintanilla also depicted security personnel as nervous about protecting the Convention Center. This is evidence of a conflict/responsibility frame combined. Yet Quintanilla depicted those at the Convention Center as peaceful, to say "waiting for a ride that's taken too long to arrive."

Kerry Sanders reported NBC's third evacuation story for the Nightly News broadcast from the New Orleans International Airport. His heartbreaking tale weaves a conflict frame with a minor frame of human-interest as well. The airport provided a medical triage area for "the largest medical evacuation ever staged" with thousands of evacuees flown in from half a dozen New Orleans hospitals. Sanders used a unique depiction to say he had never seen a situation like this in his 21 years of reporting. He used a metaphor to describe the inside of the inside of the airport as "a sea of misery and desperation."

A conflict frame is evident when Sanders said the medical staff is overwhelmed. He then set up two very important human-interest frames showing a nun prepared to die as well as a ninety-one year old man calling out to Sanders for something to eat and drink. Sanders took an unusual step to give the man food and water. This showed the

human side of Sanders, and depicted how desperate people in New Orleans had really become. Sanders closed his piece depicting how he woke up next to dead people in the Airport further emphasizing a conflict frame.

### **ABC**

ABC mentioned the Convention Center during one story on this day from reporter Pierre Thomas. This story vividly framed the issues around responsibility of the government to evacuate the people of New Orleans. The theme of ABC's story said help was too little, too late to respond to the tragedy. Thomas' first quotation in his story came from Representative Elijah Cummings speaking directly to President Bush. He said, "...God cannot be pleased with our response."

Thomas moved through the piece depicting more than 100,000 people left behind, many of them poor. He said, "...there was no system in place for local, state and Federal officials to efficiently coordinate the relief effort." He also depicted a senior federal government official believing it as rumor the people at the Convention Center had been without food and water for four days. He then showed two sound bites from people at the Convention Center crying out for food and water. Through his depictions, Thomas clearly framed a lack of responsibility from officials in charge in this story.

### **CBS**

CBS included three stories around the Superdome, Convention Center, and New Orleans International Airport. Reporter John Roberts made a cursory mention of the Superdome in his story that showed federal government help arriving in the city. Much like ABC's coverage, Roberts questioned why it took so long for help to arrive. Roberts used a responsibility frame, including sound bites from President Bush, the New Orleans

Police Chief, as well as National Guardsmen. Roberts said New Orleans officials claim the whole operation was terribly botched. As for the Superdome, Roberts actually referenced evacuations happening quickly, or at least quicker than evacuations elsewhere. He said other evacuations moved along at a “snail’s pace.” Absent from his story was any human-interest, or visual image of those evacuating the Superdome. Instead, Roberts focused on all levels of government responsibility for the entire city of New Orleans.

CBS’ second story focused on the New Orleans International Airport, much like NBC’s coverage. Reporter Lee Cowan used a metaphor to introduce the piece saying, “the human cargo kept coming...” He framed the story around conflict, yet also used human-interest, much like NBC’s coverage. He depicted the inside of the New Orleans airport as “another slice of hell.” Cowan interviewed a woman about the length of time she spent at the airport. She said she saw the sick and dead come and go. “I’ve seen a lifetime of tragedy,” said Rebekah King Conrad. “In two days?” Cowan asked. “In two days,” she responded.

Finally, CBS reporter Tracy Smith told about the situation at the New Orleans Convention Center through frames of conflict. A frame of responsibility showed up as well. Smith depicted “another day of horror.” She showed people crying for help and trying to stay safe in the shade. Smith used visual images of children playing next to dead bodies. She showed help coming to the Convention Center. She too, much like NBC’s Carl Quintanilla, questioned three star general Russell Honore. She asked Honore, “Can you understand how people are outraged?” This framed conflict with responsibility. She made another observation to Honore, saying, “but people see pictures of the tsunami where we shipped in supplies and they don't see anybody here.” Honore

responded, “we’re here now.” She closed the story by saying people don’t necessarily want food or shelter, instead they want to leave.

### **Saturday, September 3, 2005**

Evacuations continued Saturday with many stories beginning to examine officials’ actions. Frames of responsibility, law and order, and conflict are evident in both NBC and CBS’ scripts. ABC did not have coverage due to college football.

#### **NBC**

NBC referred to evacuation centers in four stories on this day. The first is a simple mention of a story to come in the headline tease. Anchor John Siegenthaler talked about a nine-year-old’s “fight for survival” inside the New Orleans Convention Center. This framed the story to come around conflict inside the Convention Center.

Siegenthaler began the next story referencing how the city of New Orleans is “in critical condition.” This metaphor depicted the situation in New Orleans as critical with the death tolls rising. It framed the story through conflict. Siegenthaler introduced reporter Don Teague who then moved through evacuations at the Superdome and Convention Center - framing the story further through responsibility. He mentioned how 35,000 people “amazingly” evacuated the Superdome and Convention Center with the help of helicopter evacuations. He included sound bites from President Bush and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. He ended his story by saying, “real progress in taking victims away from this city, though many more will likely be evacuated in days to come.” This obviously mentioned other evacuees in the city since the Superdome and Convention Center had been evacuated.



In his introduction to the next piece, John Siegenthaler said the evacuation centers had "...become hell on earth, and at the Convention Center it was a scramble to get on any chopper out of town." This metaphorical description was key to set up conflict through the eyes of people at the center. Reporter Martin Savidge continued that frame by showing the evacuations. He continued to use metaphor saying, "For the desperate, the fastest way out of hell was straight up (on a helicopter)." He said the Convention Center was a building that "symbolized suffering."

Savidge used his writing to depict those in charge (responsibility frame), and visual images to show bodies still outside the Convention Center. In a powerful close to his piece, he used a visual image of a cardboard sign that simply read, "the shelter from hell."

NBC reporter Campbell Brown introduced viewers to one of those victims at the Convention Center – nine-year-old Charles Evans. This clear human-interest frame powerfully told the story of destruction and heartache experienced by so many throughout the week.

Charles Evans led Campbell Brown through the misery and devastation at the Convention Center. Brown depicted Evans as a "survivor" in the "horrid" conditions. Brown showed visual images of people suffering at the center, while setting up a clear responsibility frame when she said, "This may be the most glaring example of how the city of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, and the federal government have failed these people left behind in this abandoned city, and even at nine years old, Charles knows it." A sub-theme of her story mentioned how people were running out of food and water at the Convention Center.

Finally, when the busses did arrive, Brown showed Evans and his family packing up their belongings. She said they didn't know where they were going, or where they would end up. Her story mainly framed the crisis through human-interest and conflict.

### ABC

ABC did not have a nightly news broadcast due to coverage of college football.

### CBS

CBS had four stories about evacuation centers. In its first story, Anchor Thalia Assuras quantified the number of evacuees leaving the Convention Center at 30,000. The first story is framed through responsibility showing the number of people being plucked off rooftops and evacuated from the Convention Center. Assuras talked about the number of National Guard troops and Marines on the ground in New Orleans. She also used depiction through quantification to show three airlines evacuating people from the New Orleans International Airport.

Reporter John Roberts briefly mentioned the Superdome and Convention Center toward the end of his story. "By late this afternoon," Roberts said, "the Superdome was all but evacuated and the National Guard had also made a good dent in the 30,000 storm victims who'd lived in the squalor at Convention Center." This depiction of squalor showed a clear conflict frame right before the following sound bite. "We should all go to heaven because I feel like we've lived through hell," one woman said.

Byron Pitts' next story put forward a theme that medical personnel were overwhelmed in New Orleans. They "have been waging a battle against very tough odds" said reporter John Roberts. That rhetoric is a catchphrase that set up another frame of conflict. Pitts introduced viewers to a paramedic that drove all the way from

Sacramento, California to care for people. He mentioned the paramedic watched three people die at the Convention Center. “It’s bad here,” Pitts said. But he used simile to transition to the New Orleans International Airport where he said thirty people died since Wednesday. Pitts closed the story by relaying a call from the Red Cross for more help.

John Roberts reported the last story with a theme of major death and destruction in New Orleans. It was more of a talkback with anchor Thalia Assuras. He depicted more dead bodies at the Convention Center, using a visual image of one of them lying out in the middle of the street. In one of the most horrid depictions, he mentioned dead bodies in other parts of the city saying how, “workers have been actually tying some of these bodies to trees, by a wrist or to stop sign just so that they don't float away so they know where to come back to for them.”

**Sunday, September 4, 2005**

**NBC**

NBC reporter Carl Quintanilla talked about violence breaking out in the city. Quintanilla set up his story with a law and order frame saying, “it’s a chaotic and developing story...” He talked about gunfire toward a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers crew on a bridge. He called this type of behavior “urban warfare” that made it harder to rescue people. He depicted rescuers unable to provide relief because of the threat of violence. Quintanilla then interviewed others stranded in the flood. One man depicted the Superdome as an undesirable place. The man said it was too hot, and said he’d rather stay in his home where it was cool. Quintanilla closed the piece mentioning, through a source, how gangs were overrunning the city.

Reporter Lisa Myers framed her piece entirely around responsibility as she examined the background of FEMA director Michael Brown. The theme of her story suggested Michael Brown failed the people of New Orleans. Myers revealed Brown's history as director of the Arabian Horse Association. She interviewed his former colleagues at the Association asking how Brown got the top job within FEMA. She depicted Brown's incompetence showing him making contradictory statements. On the day after television reports of thousands of people stuck at the Convention Center, she included a sound bite from Brown saying, "The federal government learned about those people today." She closed the piece with balance depicting other federal officials, including the President, saying Brown was doing a good job.

### **ABC**

ABC did not have a nightly news broadcast due to coverage of college football.

### **CBS**

CBS mentioned the Convention Center in a story about the continued rescues and escalating violence in the city. Reporter John Roberts did not focus on the rescue efforts there, but instead interviewed a victim who left the Convention Center to return home. "He was evacuated earlier, taken to the Convention Center. Things were so bad there, he waded back home," Roberts said. A frame of conflict was evident when he depicted a "...landscape of devastation, in toxic waters, amid rotting bodies, staying alive with food from the flooded supermarket down the street."

Lee Cowan interviewed a woman at the New Orleans International Airport. His story framed a conflict of religious faith for people. The theme of his story posits that Hurricane Katrina tested evacuee's faith. He depicted the airport's departure lounges as

“littered with despair.” He showed conflict between a woman and God as she asked why the Hurricane affected her life.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion and Conclusions

The final chapter includes a discussion of findings and implications. It also examines research limitations and recommendations for future research.

#### **Discussion of Research and Analysis**

##### *Similarities in coverage*

Throughout the week of Hurricane Katrina's impact, the networks used many of the same frames and shared journalistic values to report about the devastation. For clarity's sake, analysis takes place by day of coverage.

The three networks began their coverage of Hurricane Katrina week, identifying and framing coverage around important government figures to help people take action and manage the crisis. The networks covered evacuation orders and gave the public fair warning to make their way out of New Orleans. The three broadcasts all shared conflict as a major frame. Responsibility also showed up as minor frames in coverage. This first part of the week focused on the "preparedness" phase (Seydlitz, Williams, Laska, and Triche, 1990). The frames allowed viewers to hear the necessary steps to protect their safety showing the conflict they could encounter by staying in New Orleans. By reporting about the disaster, using metaphors like "toxic gumbo" to warn people about the disaster to come, it gave the audience a sense of urgency to evacuate.

All three networks briefly mentioned the Superdome at the end of their stories about evacuation. This similar talk probably came from shared journalistic values, as the networks described evacuation plans before even mentioning the Superdome. Notably absent through textual analysis was any coverage from inside the Superdome on the first

day before the hurricane hit. By their language, journalists seemed more concerned about helping people evacuate from the city before they went to the Superdome for coverage.

As the impact of Hurricane Katrina unfolded, the networks moved into the “response” phase of reporting about Hurricane Katrina. Each mentioned the Superdome on Monday after the Hurricane hit, yet CBS and NBC covered more of the events from inside the Superdome.

Their coverage from that day, gave viewers a sense of what conflict began to emerge from there. The two networks continued to clarify the chaos that people were experiencing, and they noted how people inside the structure started to grow frustrated. NBC provided the most comprehensive coverage from inside the Superdome, as Brian Williams gave a first person account of what it felt like to ride out the storm.

As coverage moved into Tuesday, law and order frames emerged from all three networks, though the networks barely mention the Superdome. This could have resulted from the shared journalistic values to report on other areas of crisis that seemed more important than the Superdome, notably, the other parts of New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast.

CBS is the only network to mention the Superdome would have to be evacuated. This was a key misstep for both NBC and ABC because of the importance of the events later in the week within the structure. They did not notify their audience, including government officials, of the potential for further disaster inside the Superdome. NBC instead mainly focused its coverage on the rest of the Gulf Coast for most of its

broadcast. ABC continued to focus coverage on New Orleans, and the evacuations from rooftops.

All three networks heavily shifted their coverage to the Superdome on Wednesday. The frames evident in coverage - conflict, responsibility, and law and order – showed the desperation of stranded evacuees. The networks included information so the audience could see the human suffering taking place at the Superdome. NBC's Martin Savidge said the shelter of last resort "is the last place anybody wants to be." This rhetoric gave viewers a sense of urgency to show the need for help to come. On that note, each network included sound from local, state, and federal government officials promising help through a responsibility frame. In turn, that set up key information for viewers to cast blame on those officials who did not do their job.

Thursday, the tone of network coverage shifted to a responsibility frame to fault government officials. Littlefield, et. al. (2007) point out, as "...the crisis leadership of legitimate authorities proved to be highly inadequate in response to the destruction and loss of life, the media served as a vehicle for identifying such problems" (42). The frames evident in network coverage showed the media identified many problems including a lack of leadership at the Superdome, and the new evacuation point of the Convention Center.

Each network took an opportunity to include sound from evacuees blaming the government for not responding. NBC's Brian Williams even cleverly disguised criticism when he introduced his broadcast for Thursday night. He said, "New Orleans residents (are) asking people in Washington, Are you watching, are you listening?" This frames the story based upon responsibility, or a lack thereof. By choosing to show a lack of



resources, all three networks forced viewers to perceive a lack of responsibility, a major amount of conflict, and a need for law and order.

Friday, viewers saw the first signs of government help arrive. Yet coverage from the networks continued to blame a lack of resources. A major frame from all three networks centered on responsibility. The networks included sound bites from different people that chose similar government officials to blame for the lack of help: FEMA, Mayor Ray Nagin, and “the federal government” in general. One NBC reporter even said, “...who like *the rest of us* (emphasis mine) was wondering where the rescuers were...” This type of coverage stepped out of the objective norm for journalists. Littlefield et. al (2007) found, “the media stepped outside their role of objective observer and assumed a privileged position to point blame toward those with legitimate authority” (26). The language and frames from reporters and anchors show the extreme anxiety of evacuees mixed with a lack of help from those in charge.

Evacuations continued Saturday with many stories beginning to examine officials’ actions. Frames of responsibility, law and order, and conflict are evident in both NBC and CBS scripts. ABC did not have coverage due to college football. Both NBC and CBS report about major death and destruction in New Orleans. Notably absent from NBC and CBS coverage was any more criticism of government officials. Instead, on this day, they framed their stories around the strict facts – showing how authorities evacuated the Superdome and Convention Center.

ABC did not have coverage on Sunday, as well, due to football. Law and order frames show up again in CBS and NBC as people began shooting at rescuers. The escalation of violence from these frames shows the still desperate situation in the city.

Overall, law and order, conflict, and responsibility frames dominate coverage throughout the entire week from the three networks. It is key to note responsibility frames did not start taking a negative tone until Wednesday, and even then it was sparse. By then, evacuees had spent two days in the Superdome. You'll remember all three networks chose not to cover the Superdome heavily on Tuesday. Government officials continued to take the brunt of the framing throughout the rest of the week. This, mixed with law and order and conflict framing showed the frantic situation around all three disaster evacuation centers.

#### *Differences in Coverage*

Key moments differentiated the networks from each other. Once again the analysis takes place by day.

Sunday, the networks framed coverage much the same way. Their shared journalistic values focused on sound from various officials in local, state, and federal officials as they asked people to evacuate. However, regarding the Superdome, CBS was the only network not to note a sense of conflict in the Superdome. It only mentioned it was a shelter of last resort. NBC and ABC noted evacuees were tired and hungry waiting in line to get into the Superdome. As noted above, the broadcasts focused on the rest of New Orleans and the Hurricane path, rather than the Superdome.

Monday, CBS and NBC provided first person accounts from the Superdome. Their coverage of the situation provided much more context than ABC and gave viewers a sense of the damage not only to the physical structure, but the emotional toll on those inside. This set apart their coverage to make the coverage more personal and connect

with viewers. ABC gives the Superdome a cursory mention in its story mentioning only damage to the physical structure.

Tuesday, as mentioned above, the networks shied away from intensive coverage of the Superdome, therefore many differences could not be analyzed. However, ABC chose to depict those people in the New Orleans Superdome as “poor.” This frame of “economic consequences” was the one of the only frames of its type that showed up in analysis of evacuation centers.

Wednesday, ABC and NBC chose to focus on responsibility frames while reporter Lee Cowan for CBS showed a strong human-interest frame. This frame of human-interest was extremely powerful to show the massive suffering people went through after the disaster near the Superdome. It is hard to quantifiably measure the effect of Cowan’s story on the audience; however, it allowed viewers a chance to see the pain of human emotion. That said, ABC and NBC focused more of the blame on a breakdown of government resources and they reported harder numbers than CBS. This gave the audience to see the disaster through statistics, and was an important part of coverage missing from CBS’ broadcast.

Thursday marked a change in tone for the journalists. Both CBS and NBC interjected opinion into their broadcasts, as reporters and editors continued to watch people suffer. ABC sticks to the straight facts and does not opine. Clear frames of law and order showed up in each broadcast. It is evident journalists during Hurricane Katrina stepped out of their roles as neutral observers. Some may wonder why the networks did not do so quicker.

Friday, NBC by far outshined any of the other networks with its coverage of disaster centers. Chief among the stories was Kerry Sanders' first person account of human suffering from the New Orleans International Airport. He truly stepped outside of the role of a neutral observer to give a drink to a man stranded in the baggage claim. His human-interest frame of the disaster gave far more impact than ABC's coverage, for instance, in only one story at the Convention Center. Sanders' airport account was rivaled only by Lee Cowan's story. Cowan also followed stranded evacuees at the Airport, but his story did not have quite the emotional impact as Sanders story.

Both CBS and NBC covered many of the same issues regarding the evacuation centers on Saturday. Analysis could not find many noticeable differences in stories from this day.

Absent from CBS' Sunday coverage was a remarkable find from NBC's Lisa Myers. She reported about FEMA chief Michael Brown's resume and framed the piece around responsibility. The coverage gave NBC viewers more context for all the events of the week, and also gave them someone to blame for the failure of government officials to realize the scope of the disaster.

### **Implications**

Network journalists reported Hurricane Katrina through the lens of Valkenburg's (1999) four frames, and Anderson's (1988) law and order frame. Though Hurricane Katrina provided many unplanned and unstructured news events to cover, the existence of these frames show journalists fell into routine journalistic practice - something they've been socialized to do (Singer 2004, Berkowitz 2006). Berkowitz (2006), once again, describes this practice as a "what-a-story" routine, where journalists attempt to tell a

“...highly unexpected, but well known occurrence...” through simulated work routines (126).

This research promotes “self-awareness” for reporters, editors, and news decision makers to know they still fall into work routines during disaster situations. It allows those in charge to plan for and recognize events that may happen during a disaster. It also gives decision makers a chance to realize the frames more likely to make themselves evident immediately before, during, and following a disaster event. News Directors, editors, and reporters can look to these frames based on this research, and know what to look for during future disaster situations. For instance, conflict must be covered immediately following the disaster. This is the socialization of normal news routine where decision makers should be aware.

Through that socialization for normal routine, Dulcan (2006) argues “socialization may keep reporters from looking for the most difficult stories, the stories that involve complicated emotions and moral shades of gray (83). While true, in fairness to the Katrina journalists, their efforts to find stories that moved outside the prescribed frames may have been complicated in a when the stories presented themselves in such a fast-paced way. Often, the most difficult stories to find and tell, take a detour from the socialization found in most newsrooms of the deadline oriented/breaking news model.

Of the frames found in this study, it is interesting to note when they appeared in coverage throughout the week of Hurricane Katrina. Responsibility and conflict frames showed themselves in coverage toward the beginning of the week, while law and order frames appeared after the impact happened. Overall, law and order and conflict frames

appear the most in coverage from all the networks. The week was rife with reports of looting, and conflict between various government officials and evacuees.

The economic responsibility frame did not receive as much attention as the other prescribed frames. The frame showed up in two stories and journalists may have deemed the immediacy of reporting the facts of conflict or breakdowns in law in order, before they put any analysis on the cost of the disaster.

As the world saw in reporting after the disaster, many people in New Orleans are extremely poor. The context of the reporting from the Superdome, Convention Center, and Airport did not note why many of these residents did not leave. The economic circumstances these people faced prohibited them from leaving. Journalists missed this context especially at the beginning of the week. They failed to realize while reporting about the potential natural disaster to come, the true disaster would come from those who did not have the necessary money to get out of town. For future evacuation situations, journalists should examine the economic consequences of evacuations, especially for those residents in poorer neighborhoods. This may prompt government officials to act quicker before a disaster strikes to help those who cannot help themselves.

It is important for journalists and academics alike to note how these frames showed up in coverage. This study has shown that tone, metaphors, and depictions gave journalists the necessary tools to frame coverage. Those items created subjective frames to cover the situation throughout the week, and gave journalists an easy vehicle to fall back into their socialized “what-a-story” routines.

## **Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research**

A number of limitations may have affected this research. The study only focuses on coverage for a certain time period during the day. A majority of coverage came during other parts of the day. An analysis from network morning newscasts, or breaking news throughout the day would have been ideal.

Also, the study focuses on the three major networks. Cable networks, Internet, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC also covered Hurricane Katrina's catastrophe. They provided much more text that could easily be used for future study. Specifically, the Internet gave many evacuees from New Orleans a way to keep in touch with many of their local TV stations. A detailed content analysis of the Internet's effect on coverage would be a fascinating study.

Another limitation of this study may have included a lack of quantification for the number of frames evident in stories. This study only sought to identify frames evident in stories, not quantify them. This could easily be done in future research through a comprehensive quantitative analysis.

Another limitation on research comes from a lack of visual evidence of the text. The costs were prohibitive for this researcher to request videotapes to study. Therefore, the textual analysis solely reviews transcripts. This makes it harder to study the typography, a key element in textual analysis research.

Finally, future research might include interviews with journalists about why they made some of the tone and metaphor decisions to frame coverage. Also, a detailed study on audience effect would add another dimension to this study. It was hard to determine the effect of the frames on the audience from this study. While we can hypothesize how

people responded to the coverage, it would be fascinating to see how the government, aid workers, and other journalists responded to some of the subjective reporting toward the end of the week.



## Appendix 1

### Example Table of Analysis

This is an example table I used for my analysis. It comes from a story by NBC's Kerry Sanders on Friday September 2, 2005 at the New Orleans International Airport. For each story that listed the Superdome, Convention Center, or International Airport, I used this table based on Pan and Kosicki's (1993) model to break down the sentences. I pulled out syntax, scripts, themes, rhetoric, and identified potential frames in each sentence or group of sentences. This helped identify the major frames evident in the stories.

NBC Nightly News Friday September 2, 2005  
 Story Slug: New Orleans International Airport has become a triage area.  
 Reporter: Brian Williams, Kerry Sanders  
 Major Frames Evident: Conflict, Responsibility

Sentence(s)	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Theme	Rhetoric	Potential Frame
1	Another amazing fact from this disaster: Not all of the hospitals in New Orleans are yet evacuated after this hurricane.	Lead paragraph	Actors, Setting, Context	Hospitals still not evacuated	Depiction: Another amazing fact Not all hospitals are evacuated.	Conflict
2	And we are duty-bound now to show you yet another war zone tonight: the New Orleans airport.	Lead paragraph	Actors, Action	New Orleans International Airport compared to a war zone	Metaphor, Duty bound to show you yet another war zone	Law and Order, Conflict
3-4	It is now home to the sick and dying who were forced to leave hospitals crippled by this storm. NBC's Kerry Sanders takes us to what is, for many, the first sign of hope.	Lead paragraph, reporter toss	Actors, Action	Sub-theme 1 Airport holding the sick and dying	Metaphor/Catchphrase: Hospitals crippled by this storm.	Conflict
5	It is the largest medical evacuation ever staged, more than a thousand patients flown in from a	Supporting paragraph	Actors, Action	Sub-theme 2: Largest medical evacuation ever staged, bringing	Exemplar: Largest Medical Evacuation	

	half-dozen flooded hospitals in New Orleans.				ever staged	
6	In 21 years reporting around the world, I have never seen anything like this.	Supporting Paragraph	Actors, Action, Context	Sub-theme 3: Reporter has never seen anything like this	Depiction: Reporter has never seen anything like this	
7	New Orleans International Airport is now a huge triage center, the sick stacked on luggage conveyors.	Supporting paragraph	Setting	Supports sub-theme 3	Depiction; Evacuees stacked on luggage conveyors	Conflict
8-11	At baggage claim inside, it's a sea of misery and desperation.  Unidentified Woman: This is a nightmare.  SANDERS: The medical staff is overwhelmed.  Unidentified Man: It boggles the mind of how many patients that we have here and are processing, probably 800 to a thousand in 12, 16 hours.	Supporting paragraph Quotations, Supporting paragraph	Setting Actors, Action	Sub-theme 4: Airport holds misery and desperation Sub-theme 5: Medical staff overwhelmed	Depiction/Metaphor; Sea of Misery and Desperation. Metaphor: This is a nightmare Depiction with quantification	Conflict  Conflict
12-13	SANDERS: Are they all going make it?  Man: I hope so.	Quotations	Actors, Action	Supports: sub-theme 4	Depiction: Are they all going to make it?	Conflict
14-18	SANDERS: Sister Mary, a nun for 75 years, at peace with what may come.  Sister MARY: And I'm having heart trouble now. I'm asking Jesus to come pick me up and take me off.  SANDERS: Stranded and feeling alone, some here are clinging to faith. Others, so confused they aren't even sure where they	Quotations, Supporting paragraph	Actors, Action	Sub-theme 5: People are asking to die.	Exemplar: Nun asks to die	Conflict

	are or where they're going.					
19-32	<p>Ninety-one-year-old Mark Juneau called out to me. All he wanted was something to eat and drink.</p> <p>We're just going to do it in very little sips here for you, OK? There. Mark, what you're eating, believe it or not, is the food that they give the soldiers. Did you know that?</p> <p>Mr. MARK JUNEAU: It is?</p> <p>SANDERS: OK? Now, you're just going to take a little bit. See that. Just a little bit, OK? Who's that? Good?</p> <p>Mr. JUNEAU: Yeah.</p>	Supporting paragraph, quotations	Actors, Action	Sub-theme 6: Reporter helps feed an evacuee	Exemplar: Reporter helps a hungry and thirsty many, Simile: Reporter says this is the food they feed to soldiers	Conflict; Human Interest
33-38	<p>SANDERS: Not everyone survives. I slept in the airport next to the evacuated patients. I woke up next to those who didn't make it through the night.</p> <p>Just before dawn, the military began to fly patients out to Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, and Nashville. Four months ago the crew of this C-17 was evacuating the wounded from Iraq. Kerry Sanders, New Orleans International Airport.</p>	Supporting paragraph	Actors, Action	<p>Sub-theme 7: People die at the New Orleans international airport</p> <p>Sub-theme 8 Military begins to come and take people to other cities.</p>	<p>Depiction; Not everyone survives</p> <p>Depiction: military helps take everyone away</p>	Conflict, Responsibility
39-41	Can't be said often enough: This truly is bigger than even we know standing here tonight. We'll be right	Concluding paragraph	Actors, Action			

	back with the kindness of strangers. How Americans across the country are reaching out to help.					
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## Appendix 2

### Example Transcript

The following is an example of a transcript analyzed for this thesis. I analyzed each day and each network for text that highlighted the New Orleans Superdome, Convention Center, or International Airport.

NBC News Transcripts

September 2, 2005 Friday

SHOW: NBC Nightly News 6:30 PM EST NBC

New Orleans International Airport has become triage area

**REPORTERS:** KERRY SANDERS

**LENGTH:** 414 words

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor (Baton Rouge, Louisiana):

Another amazing fact from this disaster: Not all of the hospitals in New Orleans are yet evacuated after this hurricane. And we are duty-bound now to show you yet another war zone tonight: the New Orleans airport. It is now home to the sick and dying who were forced to leave hospitals crippled by this storm. NBC's Kerry Sanders takes us to what is, for many, the first sign of hope.

KERRY SANDERS reporting:

It is the largest medical evacuation ever staged, more than a thousand patients flown in from a half-dozen flooded hospitals in New Orleans. In 21 years reporting around the world, I have never seen anything like this. New Orleans International Airport is now a huge triage center, the sick stacked on luggage conveyors. At baggage claim inside, it's a sea of misery and desperation.

Unidentified Woman: This is a nightmare.

SANDERS: The medical staff is overwhelmed.

Unidentified Man: It boggles the mind of how many patients that we have here and are processing, probably 800 to a thousand in 12, 16 hours.

SANDERS: Are they all going make it?

Man: I hope so.

SANDERS: Sister Mary, a nun for 75 years, at peace with what may come.

Sister MARY: And I'm having heart trouble now. I'm asking Jesus to come pick me up and take me off.

SANDERS: Stranded and feeling alone, some here are clinging to faith. Others, so confused they aren't even sure where they are or where they're going. Ninety-one-year-old Mark Juneau called out to me. All he wanted was something to eat and drink.

We're just going to do it in very little sips here for you, OK? There. Mark, what you're eating, believe it or not, is the food that they give the soldiers. Did you know that?

Mr. MARK JUNEAU: It is?

SANDERS: OK? Now, you're just going to take a little bit. See that. Just a little bit, OK? Who's that? Good?

Mr. JUNEAU: Yeah.

SANDERS: Not everyone survives. I slept in the airport next to the evacuated patients. I woke up next to those who didn't make it through the night.

Just before dawn, the military began to fly patients out to Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, and Nashville. Four months ago the crew of this C-17 was evacuating the wounded from Iraq. Kerry Sanders, New Orleans International Airport.

WILLIAMS: Can't be said often enough: This truly is bigger than even we know standing here tonight. We'll be right back with the kindness of strangers. How Americans across the country are reaching out to help.

TEXT:

American Red Cross 1-800-HELP NOW

Nightly.MSNBC.com

### Appendix 3

#### Numbers of Frames Evident

Though this study is not quantitative in nature, below is the number of frames quantified for each day. The number of frames might not necessarily reflect the actual story count from that night's broadcast because there may have been more two or more dominant frames evident in a story.

<b>NBC</b>	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Human Interest						1	1	
Conflict	1	1		2	2	2	3	1
Economic Consequences				1				
Responsibility	1			2	2	2	2	1
Law and Order				1	2	1		1
			None					

<b>CBS</b>	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Human Interest				1		1	1	1
Conflict	1	2	1	1		3	4	1
Economic Consequences								
Responsibility					1	2	2	
Law and Order					1	2	1	1

<b>ABC</b>	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Human Interest								
Conflict	1	1	1			2	1	
Economic Consequences					1			
Responsibility						2	1	
Law and Order				1		2		
							None	None

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