

Did you know that New Orleans is below sea level? Well, there are few spots that are above sea level, but basically it's all a big natural disaster waiting to happen – again.

You see, there's this big ol' river – the Mississippi, to be exact – that flows all the way down the USA. It starts way up there in Minnesota, meanders back and forth in a basically southerly direction for 2,320 miles, and then empties out in the state of Louisiana into the Gulf of Mexico. But as the water in the Mississippi is flowing, it's grabbing a bunch of sand and silt and dirt and rock, and taking it all for a ride. (Quick note #1: "Weathering" is the breaking down of material like big rocks into little rocks. "Erosion" is the carrying-away of the broken-down material by wind or water.) If you consider that the Grand Canyon was carved out by water (Colorado River), you'll better grasp the idea that water can weather and then erode a LOT of stuff. Anyway, the Mississippi River then terminates at the southern edge of New Orleans. But, and this is important: the mouth of the Mississippi used to be further north. Keep reading... Basically, most of New Orleans, and everything south and east of it IS the Mississippi River Delta, and the Delta is made up of the eroded material. You have to recall that the Mississippi has been terminating there for a long, LONG time. For eons, the Mississippi River has been dumping out all that sand and dirt and rock, etc. (Quick Note #2: From now on, I'll just say "sediment," instead of "dirt and rocks and sand...")

Try turning on the water to a garden hose and laying the hose on the ground. Note that the water doesn't shoot out and continue on in a narrow stream. As soon as it leaves the end of the hose, the water "fans" out. Well, rivers do the same thing, and since the Mississippi River both weathers and then erodes a tremendous amount of material, there's a lot of sediment at the mouth (termination point) of the Mississippi – and that dirt fans out. This fanned-out sediment forms the "Mississippi River *Delta*." But as the water continues to empty from the Mississippi, it continues to push that dirt out and away. But, of course, there's only so far it can push until the sediment starts to build up on the far side of the delta as the moving water loses its "pushing power." If this were to happen (as it often does) inland, the result would simply be a lake. (We'll ignore the bit about alluvial and flood plains and horseshoe bends, etc. Let's just stick with New Orleans.)

Lastly, as the sediment builds up at the far side of the Delta, it forms the lip of the southern side of the "bowl." The northern half of the bowl's lip is simply the landmass, itself – where the Mississippi River originally terminated. But that southern lip isn't enough to keep out the ocean. The delta itself? It's so fertile that people refuse to pay attention to the ocean and its inherent danger. So what have people been doing with the nutrient-rich soil of the delta? For about 200 years, they've been living there precisely because the land *is* so fertile and because the opportunity for fishing and shrimping is fantastic, and because the Mississippi River affords easy access to water-travel and distribution of goods. But every so often, the ocean level rises – hurricanes, El Nino, gravitational pull of the moon... whatever. To combat this, the southern lip of the delta has been levied and built up and strengthened. The people haven't really concentrated on the bottom of the bowl – only the southern lip – just enough to keep the ocean "out." They've even trucked in dirt. But the one thing they've never been able to do is build up the bottom of the bowl enough so that New Orleans is above sea level. (Quick Note #4: IN New Orleans, the Mississippi River occasionally runs BACKWARDS because the delta's southern lip has been built up so much. When it rains, the water can't escape, so the water literally has to be pumped out.)

Now, I used to live in New Orleans, so I feel I have the right to speak on this just a little bit. I absolutely loved it there. The people were mostly friendly, the nightlife was non-stop, the blues invaded my soul, the weather was gorgeous, and the food was amazing. But when you create a city BELOW sea level, right beside the ocean, you really have no right to complain when the sea decides to come in for a visit. So I left. Close your eyes if you want, but you're not going to stop it. What's that old saying?

**"Those who refuse to learn from history are..." What? "Doomed to repeat it?" Yes – that's it. It's not like Hurricane Katrina was a first. MANY hurricanes have totally obliterated that area of the USA. Then the Mississippi River rebuilds the delta a little further south, and it starts all over again. The "many times" include both before and after white man hit the new world, so don't blame it on the ozone layer or white supremacists.**

**If this has happened before, then WHY in the world do we assume that it won't happen 'this time?' That's insane. The question isn't "Can it?" It's "When will it?" So here comes Katrina, and everyone's told to get out of the way. But many don't. Like thousands of people standing on the tracks of the world's biggest train and just daring for the train to actually run them over, the people stood there, and nearly two thousand died. They lost the homes they built in a bowl – a bowl beside the ocean – the bowl they KNEW would fill up if a big hurricane came ashore. Then the looting started. And the murder. And the rape. And the carjacking. Then some people claimed it was all a racial plot by the evil white president. What? He made a hurricane and pointed it at New Orleans because he hated black people? And then came the inevitable, "But you didn't fix me! Hurry! More! I need money and a new home, NOW! You racist pig!"**

**And the government fell for it. People stuck out their hands and those hands were filled with \$2,000 debit cards. And I do mean "everyone" who stuck his hand out. Those 2G cards were used to buy much-needed generators – and Gucci handbags – and trips to Disney Land – and Hawaiian vacations. Trailers were sent down as temporary housing, but the trailers are still there and people are still living in the "temporary" homes. It must be nice to have homes without mortgage payments. Houston and Dallas and other cities took in people by the tens of thousands. Those who wanted free check-ups and prescription medicine without paying for the services overran Texas hospitals. And many of Katrina's hard-luck stories didn't even come from New Orleans at all. People who just wanted free rides decided to claim they were Katrina victims. Then there were the N.O. residents who claimed to have lost their homes... except they didn't own homes there (or anywhere else) in the first place. Some claimed to have lost family members, but they had no family, and some claimed they lost treasures, but didn't. The outpouring of love and money and clothing and ... and ... and ... was never before seen on such a grand scale. And much of the giving was precipitated by a demand for help by a bunch of people who built their homes and businesses in an area that they *knew* would eventually be destroyed. Somehow, with the knowledge that they were sitting on a time bomb, they demanded that the rest of the country pay to put their world back 'to rights' as they RE-BUILT their lives and homes and businesses in the same damned bowl. And here we go again.**

**Hurricane Katrina reportedly caused **\$110B in damage**. That's bad enough. It's also estimated that nearly one & a half billion dollars was lost was due to fraudulent claims – but those are just the *known* cases of fraud. How many more billions were lost to other fraudulent claims that weren't uncovered? Lastly, let's consider that certain items either never made it to New Orleans, or "disappeared" once they got there. I'm not talking about ink pens or some blankets. Entire FEMA trailers went missing. LOTS of FEMA trailers, in fact. Tractor-trailer rigs are missing. (By the way, one T/T rig can easily cost upwards of a half-million dollars.) And what of the losses suffered that had nothing to do with hurricane damage? By this, I mean the losses incurred by those in areas like Dallas, Ft. Worth, Houston, etc., due to the mass influx of "refugees" (whether or not they were actually from New Orleans or simply claimed they were in order to "get sumpin for nuttin").**

**This is not to say there were no catastrophic stories that came of the Katrina ordeal. I recall that there was a man who recanted for a news crew the horrors of being stuck in his own attic. Unable to escape, he watched helplessly as the dead bodies of his wife and children floated by. He cried so hard... As the story was broadcast, this man's EX-wife – and children – watched him on the news, knowing full well that every word out of his mouth was a lie.**

Medical institutions billed out millions of dollars for services they never rendered to people whom they never saw. Realtors were selling land that belonged to living, breathing residents of New Orleans who happened to not be home at the time. Thousands upon thousands of people from all over, asking for some sort of recompense or reimbursement, claimed to have helped or donated or worked, but didn't. A [woman](#) received 30G from the Road Home program for the loss of her home – but she lived in Dallas. [Another woman](#) simply embezzled 2/3rds of a million dollars sent down to cover medical expenses at hospitals/clinics. A [couple](#) applied for, and received, a 38G loan to repair damage to their Katrina-hit home, then the applied for aid from (again) the Road Home program, listing the exact same damage the loan was to cover, and received another 150G – but there was hardly any damage to begin with. It was so difficult to keep up with the claims that many people filed the same claims, over and over again, often when there was no loss at all. The government was defrauded, churches were defrauded, the [Red Cross](#) was defrauded, individuals were defrauded, charitable institutions were defrauded, and *all taxpayers were defrauded!*

I'm not saying that there were no true losses, or that the New Orleans residents got what they deserved. The fact is that there's not one place in the world where the inhabitants are shielded from natural disasters. While northern climes have the harshest winters, the southern climes suffer from drought, and those stuck in the middle get the tornadoes. Over "there," they get floods, and over "yonder," they're caught in collapsing buildings during earthquakes. Even beautiful Hawaii has active volcanoes. There's simply no 100% safe area on the planet.

Regardless, there's no excuse for people to assume the rest of the world owes them the right to build, or the money to RE-build, their homes literally on shifting sand. I can build a tornado shelter. I can have my home reinforced to withstand some pretty severe earthquakes. I can learn how to survive the heat or cold. But NO ONE can stop an F-5 hurricane or keep a 13' storm surge (up to 22') from flooding a freaking BOWL. Every year... EVERY YEAR, New Orleans is threatened with/hit by hurricanes.

Then there's Nashville. ...which, by the way, is *not* below sea level. While New Orleans has annual hurricanes (plural), Nashville has what's called a 500-year flood. No – there aren't a lot of details about a flood from 500 years ago, mainly because no records were kept (as they're kept today) before the USA even existed, and we've only been around for 230 years. But "500-year flood" should be a clue as to *lack* of regular flooding in that area, and certainly nothing like it did this year. The May 2010 Nashville flood did result in significant damage. Let's look at a comparison to get the real picture:

City	2005 Pop	Damage Estimate	Land Mass	Water level at flooding	Wind Speed
Nashville	<a href="#">549,110</a>	<a href="#">\$1,000,000,000</a>	<a href="#">526 sq mi</a>	<a href="#">12' above flood-stage</a>	N/A
New O.	<a href="#">454,863</a>	<a href="#">\$110,000,000,000</a>	<a href="#">4,190 sq mi</a>	<a href="#">Ave. 13' storm surge</a>	125mph

Is this clicking with anyone? New Orleans, with a *lower* population than Nashville, has 100x *more* damage. They were both flooded, so what's the difference? It wasn't the height of the water. Perhaps it was the wind? Yes – that was definitely part of the problem. How about the fact that the Nashville water could, after a while, drain off? New Orleans (I'll say this *one* more time.) is a freaking BOWL. With everything flooded; with no electricity; with no functioning pumping stations, the water had nowhere to go. It just sat there, week after week, stagnating, and carrying pestilence, disease, etc. The New Orleans' damage averaged out to \$241,831 per person although the median household income was \$35,409. Since the average household consisted of 3 people (2.9 actually), that would be three-quarters of a million dollars *per household!*

Let's look at it another way... Let's make the numbers match according to landmass. If Nashville were 8x bigger (about the same size as New Orleans, and everything else were proportionate, the stats would look like this:

City	2005 Pop	Damage Estimate	Land Mass
Nashville	4,392,880	\$8,000,000,000	4,208 sq mi
New O.	<a href="#">454,863</a>	<a href="#">\$110,000,000,000</a>	<a href="#">4,190 sq mi</a>

Totally amazing... If the areas were the same size, and the populations and damages were relative to the landmass, then Nashville would have had 10 times the population of New Orleans, while the damage would have been less than one tenth... All because water can't naturally drain from a bowl.

Going back to the original (actual) numbers, the Nashville flood damage averaged out to \$2,731.69 per person. Hmm...

City	Damage Per Capita	Total Payout by Federal Gov't	Total average Compensation/Person	Total average Compensation/Person
Nashville	\$ 1,821	Unknown**	Unknown**	N/A
New O.	\$241,831	\$127,000,000,000*	\$279,205*	\$803,797* ← !!!
			*Based on New Orleans Pre-Katrina Pop-454,863	*Based on New Orleans Post-Katrina Pop-158,000

\*\*Here's where it gets really weird. It seems that Obama agreed to send federal aid to Nashville, and FEMA requested federal funds on Nashville's behalf but, after hours of research, I can't find any indication that any funds were actually sent. And I certainly can't find any indication on how much was or will be sent. This isn't to say that Uncle Fed isn't doing anything. But with all the non-stop hype regarding New Orleans, one would think that SOME mention would have been made regarding aid to Nashville.

\*It's also important to remember that the post-Katrina population of New Orleans dropped by SIXTY-FOUR percent. The last column shows a much different number than the 2<sup>nd</sup>-to-last column, based on a post-Katrina population of only 158,000 people... (Yes... Yes... Some people got their re-building \$\$ and then left. I know. I just don't know how many.)

So how is it remotely possible that a half million people cost us – at LEAST – more than a quarter million dollars EACH – and they still haven't been "fixed?" How is it possible that the amount of reparation money is *more* than the amount of damage, but they're still 'in the hole' with abandoned/damaged buildings and homes, and homeless people?

Finally, how did the citizens' reactions differ between New Orleans and Nashville? Watch the following video. I can't verify the authenticity or veracity, but it says a lot.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=pFjaQoOdJvI](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=pFjaQoOdJvI)