“CONSIDERING THE DIRE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WE HAVE IN NEW ORLEANS, VIRTUALLY A CITY THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED, THINGS ARE GOING RELATIVELY WELL”

-MICHAEL BROWN, FEMA DIRECTOR
"I mean, you have people who don’t heed those warnings and then put people at risk as a result of not heeding those warnings. There may be a need to look at tougher penalties on those who decide to ride it out and understand that there are consequences to not leaving."

-Rick Santorum, Pennsylvania Senator
WHY DIDN’T YOU LEAVE?

After Katrina, there was certainly a tendency of victim blaming; the questions “Why didn’t they leave?” or “Why would anyone choose to live in a place 6 feet below sea level?” were commonly asked, and are still asked today. It’s difficult, as all of us are in a position of privilege (we do, after all, have the luxury to attend the University of Rochester and reflect on these issues critically), to imagine why for some leaving simply wasn’t an option. If you had to leave your home and the city that you love, would you be willing and financially able to do so? If so, consider yourself fortunate. I know that without financial support from my family, I wouldn’t be able to afford to do so.

UNDERSTANDING THE AVERAGE AMERICAN: HOW DO THEY DO IT?

GEORGE W BUSH
Net worth: $35 million
Education: Bush earned his MBA from Harvard Business School
Former US President

BARBARA BUSH (BUSH FAMILY)
Net worth: $60 million
Her views on Iraq: “Why should we hear about body bags and death? It’s not relevant. So why should I waste my beautiful mind on something like that?”
Former first lady

Michael Brown
What he’s up to: From FEMA to basketball, Mike Brown signed a four year, $18.25 million dollar contract to become the head coach of the LA Lakers
Former FEMA director

Anderson Cooper*
Net worth: $100 million
Annual Salary: $11 million
Primary Anchor of Anderson 360 on CNN

Nancy Grace
Net worth: $18 million
Annual Salary: $5 million
Host of CNN’s Nancy Grace

Rick Santorum
Net worth: $4.2 million
Pennsylvania Senator, 2012 Republican Party Presidential Candidate

Soledad O’Brien
Net Worth: $5 million
Annual Salary: $1.5 million
Education: Harvard University
Former anchor of CNN’s Starting Point

Rachel Maddow
Net worth: $12.5 million
Annual Salary: $5 million
Host of MSNBC’s The Rachel Maddow Show

Barbara Bush (BUSH FAMILY)
Net worth: $60 million

Her views on Iraq: “Why should we hear about body bags and death? It’s not relevant. So why should I waste my beautiful mind on something like that?”
Former first lady

Nancy Grace
Net worth: $18 million
Annual Salary: $5 million
Host of CNN’s Nancy Grace

Rick Santorum
Net worth: $4.2 million
Pennsylvania Senator, 2012 Republican Party Presidential Candidate

* I absolutely love Anderson Cooper and I think that Soledad O’Brien and Rachel Maddow are terrific journalists as well. However, they are still paid millions of dollars to present a specific narrative that is acceptable to both the government and the corporations that oversee mainstream media. As a member of middle-class America, the disparity between the media makers and receivers concerns me.