

Advertise on NYTimes.com

Maligned FEMA Chief Visits New Orleans

By CAMPBELL ROBERTSON
Published: August 26, 2010

NEW ORLEANS — “Put yourself in my shoes,” said Michael Brown. “You’ve just come out of a meeting where you’ve just told your boss that nothing’s working, I can’t make stuff happen, state and local government aren’t doing what they need to do, the federal government isn’t doing what it needs to do, things are bad. And he comes out and tells me I’m doing a heck of a job?”

Enlarge This Image



Lee Celano for The New York Times
Michael Brown, in group at left, the former director of FEMA, is visiting the city that made him famous.

Juda Engelmayer, PR manager for Michael D. Brown, taking a picture of Mr. Brown in New Orleans

Yes, that Michael Brown.

Mr. Brown, the former administrator of the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) and the initial poster child for all that went wrong in the aftermath of [Hurricane Katrina](#), is here for the fifth anniversary of the event that made him said poster child. The host of a Denver talk radio show these days, he was delivering his program from a station in downtown New Orleans on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Some of his callers, many of whom refer to him as Brownie and suggest that he is doing a heck of a job, were incredulous.

“You’re doing the show from Louisiana?” asked Mark from Lakewood. “Wow, that’s pretty gutsy.”

The topic of Katrina was addressed, but did not dominate the show on Wednesday night. For a few minutes, Mr. Brown discussed a newspaper article about the behavior of the police after the storm, opined on the events of those days and the subsequent lagging recovery, then suggested an America that had lost its mojo, to use his phrasing. He went on to talk about the political news in Colorado.

Harry Shearer was the guest for the third hour, promoting a documentary he recently made about the failure of the levees after Katrina.

The presence of Mr. Shearer, a dedicated chronicler of the federal failings that led to — and followed — the flooding of New Orleans, attests to an odd sort of rehabilitation for Mr. Brown, who was sent back to Washington within two weeks of the storm and resigned shortly after.

Spike Lee now calls him a scapegoat for the disaster, echoing Mr. Brown’s own analysis. The military was slow, Mr. Brown said in a brief interview at his hotel in the French Quarter, local and state officials were indecisive and [Michael Chertoff](#), the secretary of homeland security, was unresponsive. It is all in his coming book, “Deadly Indifference.”

RECOMMEND

TWITTER

LINKEDIN

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

SHARE

and
BEST DIRECTOR
Alexander Payne

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on nytimes.com.
Privacy Policy | What's This?

Log In With Facebook

What's Popular Now

Singapore announces 60 percent pay raise for ministers - The New York Times



Darren Criss of 'Glee' Fills Daniel Radcliffe's Shoes



Advertise on NYTimes.com

Today's Headlines Daily E-Mail



MOST E-MAILED

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



1. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR
The First Killings of the Holocaust

2. Jobless Rate in Germany Edges Lower, Hitting 6.8%



3. Nowhere to Go, Patients Linger in Hospitals, at a High Cost

PRESENTED BY

Log in to discover more articles based on what you've read.

Log In

Register Now

f Log In

What's This? | Don't Show

Still, pretty gutsy, no?

"I don't know where this is gutsy," he said. "This is a part of my life. This was a very significant part of my life. Everybody in the world knows it was a part of my life. So I'm going to show up."

A version of this article appeared in print on August 27, 2010, on page A9 of the New York edition.

 **Get 50% Off The New York Times & Free All Digital Access.**

[SIGN IN TO E-MAIL](#)

[PRINT](#)

[REPRINTS](#)



The chocolate trail

ALSO IN TRAVEL »

[On tour with whiskey](#)
[Nazareth as an eating destination](#)

nytimes.com

TRAVEL

Ads by Google

what's this?

The Haydel's Bakery

King Cakes Shipped Overnight
Celebrating 50 Years of Business
www.HaydelBakery.com

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

[Brown, Michael D](#)

[Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)

[Hurricane Katrina](#)

[New Orleans \(La\)](#)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM

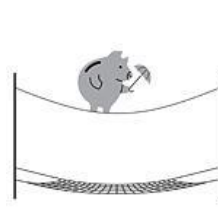


U.S. »



After 40-Year Battle, Train May Roll for Oahu

OPINION »



Op-Ed: Bring Back Boring Banks

DINING & WINE »



Restaurant Review: Wong

ARTS »



Trying Always to Please, Rarely to Challenge

OPINION »

Op-Ed: Who Should Contribute?

Noncitizens who lawfully reside in this country have a right to add their voices — and contributions — to the electoral process.

BUSINESS »



Teachers in Idaho Resist High-Tech Push