

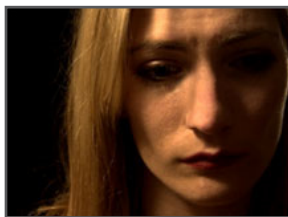


Feature

Psychological Wounds Mark Twin Anniversaries

By Judith Earley

Who knows which of the five stages of grief New Orleans residents were in on August 29, 2006, the anniversary of the day that Hurricane Katrina wrecked the Gulf Coast and destroyed much of their beloved city? Jazz trumpeter Marlon Jordan, who waited for five days to be rescued from the roof of his house in the 8th Ward last year, led an anniversary procession reminiscent of a New Orleans-style funeral that transforms from sorrow to jubilation.



But residents are not ready to celebrate. Only 50 percent of the city's population has returned. Because rental housing is both pricey and in short supply, thousands more many never be able to come home—working single mothers; the elderly; and the

disabled, who depended upon low-income housing for their survival. Consequently, one year later, New Orleans has an older, whiter, and more affluent population base.

As the cleanup progresses, bodies are still being pulled from the destruction; there are many who mourn loved ones anew as their remains are finally recovered from the debris. Thousands of abandoned homes stand just as they did the day the water receded—a ghost town of overturned furniture, rotting possessions, and mold-covered walls. No, residents are not ready to celebrate, not just yet.

But on the upside, the levees have finally been repaired, and water levels have returned to their pre-Katrina readings. Reconstruction projects continue along the Gulf Coast. Spike Lee's documentary, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, debuted on HBO; and the "Faces of Katrina" exhibit, an essay in black-and-white photography, is on display in Shreveport.

Then there is the Come Back Home Campaign, organized by survivors who have been severely affected by Katrina and who have received the least assistance and resources from government and federal agencies. From August 24 through 26, more than 5,000 displaced survivors gathered from all over the country and pitched their tents in Washington, DC. On August 27 and 28, the group moved to the Louisiana state capitol in Baton Rouge, and on August 29, survivors made

their demands known to the city council of New Orleans, camping out on the steps of City Hall. Participants say they will not be forgotten.

The psychological wounds of the 9/11 anniversary, while probably not completely healed, are at least partially scabbed over and not as painful to the touch. In this year, the fifth anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks, the American public has survived the release of two of three films dramatizing that day. *United 93* depicts a real-time account of the events aboard the fourth flight before going down. Oliver Stone's *World Trade Center* tells the story of two Port Authority police officers who are among the last survivors pulled from the World Trade Center. Yet to be released is *102 Minutes*, which re-creates the time between American Airlines Flight 11's crash into the first tower and the building's subsequent collapse.

Earlier this year, unrepentant 9/11 terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui avoided the death penalty and was locked up for life. And after years of bickering and "back to the drawing board" design conflicts, construction has finally begun on the 1,776-foot Freedom Tower on Ground Zero, its height a tribute to the country's birth year of 1776. The plans include wrapping the tower's 187-foot concrete base in glass prisms to make it look less like a concrete bunker. The Freedom Tower is designed to be the *pièce de résistance* of the new World Trade Center complex, scheduled for a 2012 completion date.

England's West Yorkshire Police Band accepted an invitation to play in New York on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, paying their respects to 67 fellow Englishmen who died five years ago. In the works in Washington, DC, is a permanent memorial to plane and Pentagon victims to be constructed inside the Defense Department headquarters. And in Pennsylvania, where United Flight 93 crashed near the town of Shanksville,



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families of the victims and state officials have received approval for funding for a permanent memorial at the site.

Approximately \$5 million in federal monies will be set aside to buy the field.

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