‘Racism’ They Charged

The aftermath of Katrina resulted in many questions and few answers. Every news station showed footage of residents, often African-Americans, wading through waste-high water in search of food, shelter, and loved ones. Why did five days go by without any perceived help from the government? Is racism the reason for the delay in aid and security? Bold and biased statements were made linking the actions following the storm to racism. Kanye West is quoted as saying our president delayed recovery actions because “most of the people are black. George Bush doesn’t care about black people.” The New Orleans convention center is compared to “the hull of a slave ship.” This article shows that racism is one of the first conclusions some formulate when viewing the aftermath. Yet, looking at past records, our government was just as slow, or caught of guard, when dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. Five days without relief followed Andrew; thousands were left without food, water, and looting persisted, very similar to events down south. Hurricane Katrina slammed into the record books as being the third largest to hit America. McWhorter offers the viewpoint that because our government was simply caught off guard; the reaction time continues to lag behind the public’s expectations. Before pointing fingers and accusing public figures of being racists, people need to re-analyze the situation.

This article analyzes why people assume racism as the first conclusion. Unlike the other articles, this focuses on racism in the media and general public, not in the workplace. It is amazing how many different conclusions can be taken from identical circumstances and events. The viewpoint and past experience can alter our conclusions.