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2022
THE ALBERT MAYSLES AWARD
FOR BEST NEW DOCUMENTARY DIRECTOR
HUMAN/NATURE
AWARD



OUR STORY, AFTER THE
WORLD STOPPED WATCHING

A FILM BY EDWARD BUCKLES, JR.

HBO ORIGINAL

KATRINA BABIES



NEW DOCUMENTARY
NOW STREAMING

HBOmax

DISCUSSION GUIDE

KATRINA BABIES

From director Edward Buckles, Jr., ***Katrina Babies*** offers an intimate look at the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and its impact on the youth of New Orleans. An entire generation has grappled with the lifelong impact of having their childhood redefined by tragedy. Buckles, Jr., who was 12 when the hurricane hit, documents the stories of his childhood peers who survived the storm, while opening a door for his own healing, capturing the spirit and resilience of New Orleans.

Katrina Babies is a co-production between Invisible Pictures and TIME Studios in association with Creative Control and House of the Young Entertainment. The film is produced by Edward Buckles, Jr., Audrey Rosenberg of Invisible Pictures, Rebecca Teitel of TIME Studios; executive produced by Coodie & Chike of Creative Control, Ian Orefice, Mike Beck and Alexa Conway of TIME Studios, Jess Jacobs of Invisible Pictures.

Run Time: 81 minutes

Hashtag: #KatrinaBabies

Facebook: [@HBO](#), [@HBODocs](#), [@HBOMax](#)

Twitter: [@HBO](#), [@HBODocs](#), [@HBOMax](#)

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Website



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Director's statement



"After my family and I experienced Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we were left to pick up the pieces of a situation that seemed totally out of our control. I was 12 years old, and like with many catastrophes, children were an afterthought."

"It baffled me that after we experienced one of the deadliest natural disasters in the U.S. no one asked us how we were doing or feeling. No one asked us right after the storm and no one is asking now, so I picked up a camera and decided to do it myself. What I'm most excited about is showing the beauty of New Orleans youth, how we are owning our resilience, and bringing back the city that WE love."

- Edward Buckles, Jr., Director

How to use this guide

Thank you for sharing ***Katrina Babies*** with your community. This guide is designed to navigate viewers through a conversation about your thoughts, emotions, questions, and reactions to the film. It contains information about the film, resources for further learning, and discussion questions to deepen your understanding of the impact of Hurricane Katrina on survivors, and offer you ways to deepen your own engagement around this human crisis.

If you choose to address content warnings, you may inform audience members that the film includes themes of natural disaster, pain, human suffering, racism, and discussions on mental illness.

Encourage your community, friends, family, students to do what they need to in order to feel safe, heard, and supported before, during, and after their screening. Provide time for reflection and discussion following the screening and ensure that you direct your audience towards resources (listed later in the guide) that can help them to continue to process and learn after the screening ends.



Discussion questions

HURRICANE KATRINA/RELIEF

1. What are your biggest takeaways from ***Katrina Babies***? After watching the film, has your viewpoint of Hurricane Katrina changed? Share a single moment, line, or visual that stood out to you.
2. After observing and processing how these individuals were affected by Hurricane Katrina, what similarities have you seen regarding the government and public's response to the basic needs of underserved communities, especially in times of crisis?
3. Hurricane Katrina happened 17 years ago in 2005. Did you have a clear understanding and knowledge about the disaster before watching this film? Did your understanding of the societal aftermath of natural disasters change? Discuss how the director's artistic and humanistic approach aided in processing these different perspectives.

BLACK MENTAL HEALTH

1. We often look at the consequences of natural disasters in terms of numbers - number of deaths, number of homes destroyed, number of dollars cost. Less often do we look at the toll these disasters take in less measurable ways, such as the mental health of its survivors. How did the film encourage you to reflect on the effects of natural disasters in ways that you hadn't considered before?
2. The negative effects of a natural disaster can be difficult to measure before they take place. With the information that you have, what societal changes and preventative steps are important to ensure that historically marginalized communities receive adequate treatment during times of need?
3. How can the recommended changes mentioned from the previous question be integrated in an educational way? Are there ways to integrate those changes in the community or even an academic setting that ensures that information becomes general open knowledge? How can (all) communities best amplify those changes?
4. Does the newly acquired information from viewing ***Katrina Babies*** alter your perspective regarding the heightened challenges many predominantly Black communities faced after the hurricane? Has it impacted your perspective of what historically marginalized and underserved communities face during other trying times, such as COVID-19, the recession, and climate change? If so, how does this change your approach to your daily activities within and outside of your own immediate community?

5. The film's director, Edward Buckles, Jr., states: *"After my family and I experienced Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we were left to pick up the pieces of a situation that seemed totally out of our control. I was 12 years old, and like with many catastrophes, children were an afterthought."* What and how many catastrophes can you recall where children's needs and well-being were not prioritized or considered? How can federal and state authorities take better care of young people, especially people of color, following tragedy and tough situations? How can parents, caretakers, families, the state, and educators support?
6. In the film, one of the individuals shares her experience at the convention center immediately following Hurricane Katrina, and explains that she has never talked about her experience with anyone, because no one ever asked her about it. Do you believe that sharing one's traumatic experiences can have a positive effect on one's mental health? If so, how can trauma survivors be supported?

COMMUNITY/YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

7. In what ways do you think that difficult and trying events bring communities together, and make them stronger? Can you recall an example of this happening in your own community?
8. What positive changes have you seen post-Hurricane Katrina or other disasters or attacks that have improved the lives of all people in addition to improving/eradicating systemic issues around the lives of historically marginalized communities? How can those changes be improved upon and disseminated nationally?
9. What are some of the biggest challenges for those from historically marginalized communities to begin the process and execute instituting positive systemic change? Additionally, how will you share what you saw in the film ***Katrina Babies*** with friends, family, and or loved ones to institute positive change?
10. When reflecting on his Aunt Tina's home, director Edward Buckles, Jr. explains that, *"In New Orleans, I think that one thing that we had to our advantage was family, and the warmth of a home."* Is there a place in your community, whether a family member's home, a friend's house, your school, a community center, or elsewhere, where you feel the most comfort and warmth? What kind of impact do you think losing that place would have on you?

STORYTELLING/NARRATIVE

11. This film features real-life survivors of Hurricane Katrina and how their lives were upended by this disaster when they were children. Do you find first-person accounts of survivors and victims to be more effective at communicating empathy and emotions than second or third person accounts? Do you think first hand traumatic experiences are more effective in general when garnering support or action around certain issues?
12. Most documentaries are not made by the subjects of the film, however this film's director is also a survivor of the hurricane. How do you think a first person account of the tragedy, especially through the director's lens, influences a film and the story? Did you see any major differences between this film and other films and/or documentaries that you might have seen recently-particularly films and/or documentaries centered around natural disasters or tragedies?
13. Did the inclusion of the beautifully animated reenactments in ***Katrina Babies*** help you more strongly connect with or understand the lived experiences shared throughout the film? How so?



Learning & action

The impact of systemic inequality is felt by historically marginalized communities in every part of this country, and the importance of understanding these issues is vital to eradicating systemic inequalities moving forward. By and large, it takes the effort of all communities to institute positive change ensuring that historically marginalized communities are no longer underserved. ***Katrina Babies*** is a film that ignites the flame of question as it pertains to starting conversations around these systemic and prevalent issues that have yet to be properly addressed.

Whether you are a student looking to increase the awareness and visibility of systemic inequality on your campus, an activist seeking to change your community for the better, or if you're simply ready to learn more about these issues, we have curated action items to help you get started. If there are programs at your school, place of work, city or town already doing this work, or if you have additional ideas for ways to get involved, we encourage you to be creative and utilize any ideas you might have.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FILM

- Visit the [film page](#) to learn more, watch it again, or share it with friends and family. Be sure to share it on your social channels and discuss how you felt after watching the film using #KatrinaBabies.

DEEPEN YOUR LEARNING AND UNDERSTANDING

- **House of the Young Entertainment** provides a platform that authentically uplifts the narrative & shows the organic existence of Black creators. Check out their [Instagram](#) & [Facebook page](#).
- The mission of **Black Education For New Orleans (BE NOLA)** is to support Black educators and schools to ensure an education that creates better outcomes and opportunities for Black children in New Orleans as a critical factor in building a thriving Black community. Check out their [programs and blog here](#).
- Next time you are in New Orleans or if you are a local, visit the [Ashé Cultural Arts Center](#). Their mission is to use art and culture to support human, community, and economic development. No plans of visiting in the near future? Check out their amazing [photos and videos](#).
- In order to better assist you in understand the historic systemic inequities that have plagued traditionally underserved communities before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina, we recommend learning about [Another Gulf](#), as their work is to directly reverse the negative impact of coastal disasters, particularly for historically underserved

communities, and to develop a safer more equitable system and set of resources for future generations.

- **OVNV** was founded in 2015 to organize parents to expand quality educational access for students in New Orleans to create a more equitable system. Check out their [resource hub](#) which includes a myriad of topics from COVID-19 testing to mental health support.
- Hurricane Katrina was the costliest storm in U.S. history, and its effects are still felt today in New Orleans and coastal Louisiana. Read [Hurricane Katrina, Explained](#).
- Read [11 Facts about Hurricane Katrina](#) from DoSomething.org.
- Learn about [Mental Health First Aid](#): with evidence-based programs designed specifically for adults, teens, caregivers, veterans, law enforcement, EMS personnel, school faculty and more, there's a Mental Health First Aid course for anyone looking to make a difference in their community. Join this community and #BeTheDifference today.
- Want to learn more about some more amazing New Orleans organizations? Here are [8 homegrown organizations](#) powering positive change in their amazing city!

TAKE ACTION

- [YouthForce NOLA](#) is an education, business, and civic collaborative that builds bridges between school and work. Through their network of partner schools, employers, training providers, and community organizations, they open doors to economic opportunity for New Orleans students. What better way to build the future than to invest in it? Investments don't always have to be financial. Take some time to empower and connect young people to economic opportunities that lead to long-term economic growth and prosperity by checking out their website.
 - Are you an employer? If so, inspire the next generation of leaders in your industry through meaningful work experience by joining their [employer network of organizations](#) who are preparing New Orleans public school students for success.
- **Living School** cultivates equity by nurturing students to do work that improves their lives, communities, and environment through holistic health, citizenship, & entrepreneurship. They envision a world where all children get what they need to live healthy, rewarding lives in equitable, peaceful communities, in an interconnected, thriving world. If you're interested in making a positive difference in the lives of youth, feel free to reach out and be as creative as you wish, as Living School staff encourages [open contact](#).

- **Hands On New Orleans** needs [volunteer](#) drivers to pick up and deliver multiple days' worth of meals throughout New Orleans. They are also looking for volunteer callers to conduct follow-up check-ins to make sure meal recipients receive their food as scheduled, maintain good health and maintain good spirits.
- **SBP** recruits passionate leaders from across the country to disrupt our country's traditional disaster recovery model. SBP AmeriCorps Members will return hard-working Americans, displaced by natural disasters, to their homes. To achieve their mission, SBP takes a holistic approach to disasters—increasing resilience before, and streamlining recovery after. SBP encourages all who are interested in helping build up and forward to volunteer, feel free to begin that process [here](#).
- **United Way** is an international network of over 1,800 local nonprofit fundraising affiliates. They design & implement programs to help individuals & communities become self-sufficient. 90% of every dollar goes directly toward their programs. [Take action](#) by joining in to help build stronger, more resilient and sustainable infrastructure in the communities that need it most.
- Learn about the amazing resources provided by the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) and their [free helpline](#) that you can share with your friends, family, community!
- The [Black Mental Health Alliance](#) works to develop, promote and sponsor trusted culturally-relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and their communities. Connect with a therapist [here](#).

