

**THE BLOG**

Hurricane Karl

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When Soledad O'Brien interviewed Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco on Tuesday morning, Karl Rove was the ventriloquist, and CNN was the dummy. Why didn't you federalize the National Guard? Soledad kept pressing, perhaps listening to the producer in her earpiece. Why didn't you do what the President wanted, Governor? For every Shepard Smith who's grown a backbone in this debacle, there's a spineless Newsweek or CNN co-conspirator.

If Blanco had federalized the Guard, would Michael Chertoff not have told NPR that it was just a "rumor" that thousands were miserably suffering in the New Orleans Convention Center? If Blanco had done what Bush wanted, would Michael Brown be any less a clueless political hack? Would more Louisiana Guards have been at home instead of in Iraq? Would the budgets of FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers not have been cut these last five years? Would Bush not have been surprised that a levee could break? Would Condi not have gone shoe-shopping?

If you control the question, you control the debate. This kind of manipulation is consensual; it's what happens when a bizarre postmodern journalistic convention (liars deserve equal time) meets the power that Rove wields so ruthlessly. If Iraq didn't do it, isn't Katrina the moment for the media finally to cry rape?

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