



The Old Man and
THE STORM

1 x 60



International

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After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf Coast in the summer of 2005, the United States Congress appropriated an unprecedented \$116 billion for relief, recovery and rebuilding efforts. While it seemed that sweat equity and billions of federal dollars would have been sufficient to bring back New Orleans, almost three years later, the money committed to its residents has been slow to reach them. *The Old Man and the Storm* is a two-year journey by filmmaker June Cross to understand what one family has endured as these slow bureaucratic processes unfold.

Herbert and Lydia Gettridge raised 9 children in the mostly African-American neighborhood of the Lower Ninth Ward. Their house, which Mr. Gettridge built on land he purchased in 1943, took on ten feet of water when the levees breached. Five of the Gettridge children also owned homes in New Orleans. They all lost everything.

A few Gettridge family members, especially the grandchildren, have decided they do not want to move back. But Herbert Gettridge and three of his children, Leonard, Ronald, and Gale, have forged ahead with gutting and rebuilding their homes, even as the future of the city remains uncertain. Through them, we watch the family's daily struggle to rebuild their lives.

When we meet 83-year-old Herbert Gettridge, he is skipping the 2006 Mardi Gras festivities in order to clear debris from his front lawn. He is camping out in his house without electricity, gas or water. None of his neighbors have returned for blocks. His goal is to get the house in good enough shape for Lydia, who is staying with their daughter in Wisconsin, to return. Mr. Gettridge is a master plasterer and experienced builder, but still it will take him 18 months before he can bring his wife home.

The Old Man and the Storm interviews state and federal officials as it investigates the political imbroglios that cause these daily struggles. What will it take to cut through FEMA's red tape and rebuild New Orleans's public infrastructure? When will the squabbling stop over the federal rebuilding money promised through the state-run "Road Home" program? As Mr. Gettridge notes, it's been over two years, and it seems like everyone's put New Orleans on hold.

The Old Man and the Storm is a film about the tenacity of those New Orleanians who endure despite the devastation and political turmoil; who hold on to their traditions, history and community; who struggle to bring back the city they love.

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CREDITS

FRONTLINE Executive Producer: David Fanning
Writer, Producer, Reporter: June Cross

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