

NPR – All Things Considered
News Analysis by Daniel Schorr

Intelligent Design and Hard Times

On my 89th birthday I ask indulgence to depart from customary journalistic detachment. Into the long running argument about creationism versus evolution there has lately been added a new catch-phrase: a version of creationism called “intelligent design.”

President Bush has staked out a non-position on this subject, which is: that both sides ought to be properly taught in the schools of America in case there are some who haven't made up their minds.

But as the President cuts short his vacation by two days to deal with the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Katrina he might well have reflected - if this was a result of intelligent design, then the designer has something to answer for.

Rarely in my lifetime can I remember (besides the World War, the Holocaust, the plaque epidemics) so much grievous pain visited upon the human species by human beings or by forces beyond their control. Drought, flood and famine, a deadly tsunami, war and insurrection and the United States, while fending off conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, leads the way in the sales of arms to developing countries.

Death and destruction seem not to be equal opportunity scourges. Hurricanes strike with greater force at well-heeled occupants of beach homes than inland residents. On the other hand, as the *Wall Street Journal* noted, the evacuation of New Orleans was a model of efficiency for those with cars - leaving the others to seek shelter in the Superdome.

Are hurricanes part of some mysterious design? The *New York Times* explains that “the severity of hurricane seasons varies with the cycles of natural change of temperature over the Atlantic over several decades.”

Did you say “natural”? But where does natural come from? Oh...here we go again...
This is Daniel Schorr.