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Katrina's Secrets

An Intimate Look at Former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin



Ray Nagin Talks about book *Katrina's Secrets*

A Data News Weekly Exclusive
By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

Return of Ray

On this day as I sit inside of Mr. Chill's Barbershop while a construction crew is fixing the street in front of his building waiting for former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin to conduct an interview on his newly released book *Katrina's Secrets: Storms After the Storm*. I think of how he's been out of the public eye and now he's re-emerging. Watching him on a recent slew of shows including the Today Show with Matt Lauer and the Daily Show

with Jon Stewart, I was reminded that Ray Nagin is unlike many modern political figures. Whereas in the case with a lot of political professionals many of the things they say and do are calculated and measured by a political risk/gain quotient. And in general they can sometimes come off as stiff, rehearsed and inauthentic, but this has never been the modus operandi of Ray Nagin. His frank words and unscripted moments have sometimes found him in the crosshairs in a chorus of criticism. During his eight years in office particularly after Hurricane Katrina where bouquets of praise suddenly became brickbats. Nagin took the blunt of criticism in some cases unfairly of things gone wrong in a City, where the blame should have been placed in the hands of many. On this day, Nagin has launched a book called *Katrina's Secrets:*

Storms after the Storm, telling his side of the story, revealing some of things previously unknown to the public.

Katrina's Secrets: A Look Behind the Book

Ray Nagin walks in dressed casual in a golf shirt and jeans, he is his usual affable self and from my many interviews with him in the past his body language shows he is more relaxed and content these days as simply "Citizen Nagin." On the motivation and evolution of writing the book he says, "When I got out of office all I wanted to do was put together a personal library of my eight years in office. And when I began going through the Katrina stuff. I realized there were a lot of things that happened which people weren't aware of and I was on the front lines and behind the scene and wanted to tell this story."

As we continued, I ask for a brief tease of what secrets the book has. In the book he talks about some things that were well-documented while other unknown events during the storm and its aftermath which may stir controversy. Of these he says, "There were problems with surrounding parishes, for example, Jefferson Parish dumped their water on our side knowing that there was a breach in the 17th Street Canal further flooding Lakeview and other parts of the city." Continuing he says, "In St. Bernard Parish they barricaded the one road going from the Ninth Ward to Chalmette to block people from escaping, and of course in Gretna where people were trying to leave from the Convention Center to safety being met with attack dogs and machine guns."

In the beginning stages of writing the book Nagin spoke with several agents who were interested in his story, but soon came to realize that in the final draft stages he may not be in complete control of his narrative. And after living through a disaster and seeing the national news media and others misinterpret and not understand when writing about the days of Katrina and its aftermath, he felt he would

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rather self-publish to say exactly what he wanted to say unfiltered. "I chose to self-publish my book because I wanted to control my story." "Many were interested but they wanted to tweak it and told me when I turn in my manuscript they basically have control and I wanted to tell my story in a way that was authentically Ray Nagin and how I intended to tell it."

Citizen Nagin

No longer the mayor today Nagin is back to doing what he has done most of his life, being a successful businessman. Presently, he is involved in entrepreneurial pursuits that take him around the world and spending time with his family and by the look of the golf-shirt and the emblazoned emblem, perhaps spending time on the links hitting a few balls. "I have been low key, doing public speaking, I've gotten into the green energy business, I have been doing disaster recovery work and I just got back from Europe talking about flood controls; and I am getting ready to go to Puerto Rico to talk with their mayors so they can learn from our Katrina experience," Nagin says of how he now spends his days.

As we talk the sounds of the road project is in the background. Citizen Nagin now looks around at a city that is changing, six years after the catastrophe the ship he once captained is going in a new direction; something he looks at with mixed feelings. "I see a city that is going in a positive and negative direction simultaneously, I remember the city without lights and only a few people, and today I see many people have returned, construction is going on and while high unemployment is the trend across the country in New Orleans it is lower than the national average." He says of the things that he is dismayed to see that he felt were moving forward during his administration, "I look at the crime issue and it is on the uptake, I think some of the momentum in making the city less violent also I see with some of the construction activity I think we are seeing a lull in that; but I am hopeful because people still have hope that the city is coming back and that has been the backbone of the recovery the will and drive of the people."

New Orleans in Black and White Revisited

One cannot mention the name Ray Nagin without thinking of the words echoed on Martin Luther King Day in 2006, "Chocolate City." As Nagin and I have a laugh about how this was blown out of proportion by the mainstream

media he talks about a very real racial and class divide that continues in the City of New Orleans. "Some people want to act like it is a new development, there were race and class issues before I was mayor and in this city and its history, New Orleans was the largest slave trading post in the south," says Nagin of the City and its legacy." Continuing he says, "And even some of the things that lead to segregation after Reconstruction that led to the Jim Crow Laws being passed happened in New Orleans."

Going from its history to modern New Orleans and racial strife, "We had the Razzoo's incident; we had the mystery shoppers go in the French Quarter and find out Blacks were being treated unfairly." Speaking of the racial climate post - Katrina he says, "After Katrina I was in the middle of a race war where some people were talking about closing down parts of the city and many of those proposed were predominately African-American sections of the city and I stood up and said no. Then doing the election they tried to make it hard for people to vote." On a more conciliatory note feels that race is a problem but through acknowledging it can be what is needed to build bridges of understanding.

Talking of politics and the business of race and economics and how they intersect in New Orleans and how they sometimes create a gulf between the races, "I think we need to get real, we are pretending that there are not conflicts; we are pretending things are now better because we got some other people in office and it's just not real." Talking of the need for economic equity he says, "Beyond simply looking at race the underlying issue of economic inequity still hampers this city."

While Nagin sits his voice inflects with dismay that when he intended to help minority businesses he was met with resistance from some segments of the city's leadership. "When I tried to include more African-Americans in the economic mix, for example with the garbage collection situation I received flak and everything was done above board, and during my administration we had Disney like cleaning services where people applauded us but overall many of the positive things that came out of our administration was overlooked and those negative things were magnified." "Now funding for services has been reduced and according to a recent poll New Orleans has been voted one of the dirtiest cities in America." Nagin contends race still mat-



Former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin



Nagin at Press Conference held at Ashe Cultural Center

ters in how leaders are assessed and how praise and penalties are doled out. "As far as how leaders and people are judged based on race is still one-sided and we continue to have double standards and we have to get real and deal with it to get this city moving forward together."

Better Days And If I Had To Do It All Over Again

They say that hindsight is 20/20 and that is also the case with Former Mayor Nagin as he looks back on what he sees as the successes and failures of his administration, "In my first term

people were coming off the poverty rolls, Hollywood South was just happening and things were good. But as I look back on Katrina I would have called a mandatory evacuation earlier, would it had made a difference I don't know." And today six years later many are still dealing with the aftermath of the storm and have not been able to find a sense of normalcy resulting in a mental health crisis, a point not lost on Nagin, "I wish that more resources could have been put into dealing with the mental health issues associated with Katrina. I should have pushed harder to get people the

help they needed as suicides went up."

As a city stood in darkness with an uncertain future he says of the joy of seeing the city repopulated, albeit with some problems people are trying to get their lives back together. Saying of his successes, "Just the way we repopulated the city, we avoided bankruptcy, we figured out a way to get this city going again. We lobbied for better hurricane protection that we do have now, and people were allowed to come back to the city because there were certain ele-

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Legal Notice

Legal Notice

Summary Notice of InEx Class Action Settlement

YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE A SETTLEMENT PAYMENT IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE CONDITIONAL SETTLEMENT CLASS CONSISTING OF:

All persons or entities with claims, known and unknown, against the Settling Defendants arising from, or otherwise related in any way to Chinese Drywall sold, marketed, distributed, and/or supplied by Interior/Exterior Building Supply, L.P. ("InEx").

This Notice is only a summary. A more detailed copy of the Class Notice may be obtained from Class Counsel, Russ Herman, HERMAN, HERMAN, KATZ & COTLAR, LLP, 820 O'Keefe Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70113, telephone number (504) 581-4892.

Capitalized terms in this Notice have the same meaning as those defined in the InEx Settlement Agreement. The Settlement Agreement is posted on the District Court's Chinese Drywall MDL website at <http://www.laed.uscourts.gov/Drywall/Drywall.htm>, the CPSC website, and the Department of Health websites for Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Description of the Settlement and Claims

The Settlement is intended to resolve claims brought against InEx for the sale, marketing, distribution and/or supply of Chinese Drywall that was used in the construction of properties in the United States. Plaintiffs have filed complaints against InEx to recover the costs of remediating their properties damaged by Chinese Drywall and other damages. InEx denies any wrongdoing whatsoever.

The Court has conditionally certified the class for settlement purposes only. The Court has not determined the merits of any claims or defenses of the parties. The InEx Settlement will become effective only upon final approval by the Court.

If approved, a Settlement Fund of \$8,000,000, minus payments made in prior Chinese Drywall settlements with InEx and minus the costs of Notice advanced by the Insurers, will be created from insurance proceeds from the Insurers. InEx will assign its rights to \$72 million of excess liability insurance to Class members with claims arising from Affected Property located in states other than Louisiana. Louisiana claimants will have the right

to pursue in a direct action InEx's excess insurance to the extent of the Available Policy Limits. The Settlement Fund will be allocated to pay for the costs of remediating Affected Properties and other damages. The Settling Defendants are not permitted to receive any of the Settlement funds.

The Plaintiffs' Steering Committee, common benefit attorneys and private counsel for Class members are seeking in the aggregate an award of attorneys' fees of no more than 32% of the Settlement Fund, plus reimbursement of reasonable expenses including the costs of Notice.

Requests for Exclusion

Class members may request exclusion from the Conditional Settlement Class. If you request exclusion, you will be excluded from sharing in the benefits of this Settlement. The procedure for requesting exclusion is set forth in detail in the Class Notice. Requests for exclusion must be postmarked on or before **August 29, 2011**.

Settlement Hearing

A formal hearing will be held in Courtroom C-456 of the United States Courthouse, 500 Poydras Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130, at 9:00 a.m., on **October 27, 2011**, to determine whether: the Settlement is fair, reasonable and adequate and should be approved finally; the Class should be finally certified; and the Litigation dismissed with prejudice as to the Settling Defendants.

At the Fairness Hearing, Class members may object to the Settlement, provided that the procedure for objection set forth in the Class Notice is followed. On or before **August 29, 2011**, you must provide notice in writing of your intent to object to the Settlement.

Any Class member who does not timely object to the Settlement shall be deemed to have waived all objections.

Effect of Final Court Approval

If the settlement is approved, the Litigation will be dismissed with prejudice as to InEx, Arch Insurance Company and Liberty Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and the other Settling Defendants. Unless you exclude yourself from the Settlement, upon Court approval of the Settlement, you will be bound by the Settlement including the judgment of dismissal.

Close Ties: Uniting a Community

By Brandon Jones
Data News Contributor

Recently, Wilbert "Chill" Wilson and Dr. Andre Perry hosted a Tie Tying Event at Mr. Chill's First Class Cuts. The Tie Tying event was a chance for the youth of New Orleans to learn how to tie a tie and to be mentored by men from the community. When I arrived at Mr. Chill's shop for the event I was immediately overwhelmed and shocked at all of the excitement that filled the room. It was strange for me to see that of all of the kids I was one of few who actually knew how to tie a tie.

It was an event filled with music, fun and camaraderie, and towards the end all the young men learned how to knot a tie. Dr. Perry and Mr. Chill came together to create this event and



Brandon Jones

to my surprise it was extremely black and white and simple. What they wanted to accomplish from this event is to basically tell the youth of New Orleans to stay out of trouble and to live a good life

instead of the alternative of living in infamy.

After being at the event I was introduced to my mentor, a man by the name of Edwin Buggage, who is the Editor of Data News Weekly

and also works at Xavier University. I was especially impressed by all of the places he'd traveled to and his wellspring of knowledge. He also gave me one piece of advice that really stuck with me; he said that he feels that nowadays it's good to travel because it can broaden your horizons and make you see the world through new and expanded eyes. He advised me while I am young to leave the country for a year or two and submerge myself in another culture and that really stuck with me because I had never been out of the country and always thought about it so that was the perfect little confirmation that I needed.

The Tie Tying Event was not only a huge experience for me because I was asked to write an article on the event but it was also

a huge experience because I was selected out of a handful of kids to be a part of something much bigger. I was chosen to be a part of a documentary called 'Close Ties' about the event and the people who participated; and how it can inspire a community. This was my first real time actually networking with other accomplished males and even though I was a little nervous I jumped into the process of everything. To my surprise the Director Gemal Woods came to my tennis match and filmed it, he also interviewed me on my experience at the Tie Event and he interviewed me on my high school experience as well as my relationship with tennis. I was excited to take part in this amazing experience and it has inspired me to strive for excellence.

Official Court Notice

Children who lived, stayed, or visited at public housing in New Orleans before Feb. 17, 2001, might qualify for money from a \$65 million settlement fund.

Settlements have been proposed in a class action lawsuit about whether children were injured by lead at Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) public housing developments. People who qualify must register by **October 20, 2011** to receive future settlement notices and to get a claim form to ask for a payment. If you are included you may object to the settlements, or ask to speak in Court about the fairness of the settlements. The Orleans Parish Civil District Court in Louisiana authorized this notice. The Court must decide whether to approve the settlements before money is paid to those included.

Who's Included?

You qualify as a Class Member if, before February 17, 2001, you were damaged by lead present in the Iberville, Florida, Lafitte, B.W. Cooper, St. Bernard, Desire, Guste, Fischer, St. Thomas, or C.J. Peete/Magnolia public housing development and either: (a) You filed a lawsuit against HANO and/or C.J. Brown Property Management, Inc., C.J. Brown Public Housing, Inc. and/or Ventana Property Management, Inc., Ventana Public Housing Management, Inc. and/or the City of New Orleans saying that you were hurt from exposure to lead at one of the HANO public housing developments; or (b) You have or can get medical documents or other evidence showing you were lead poisoned, specifically a document that shows you had an elevated blood lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dl) of whole blood, or higher, when you were six years old or younger and you were born on or after December 12, 1987. Register, and get more information, including a Detailed Notice, at www.HanoLeadSettlements.com—or—by calling toll free 1-888-768-2043.

What do the settlements provide?

A \$65 million Settlement Fund will be set up. After deducting money for lawyers' fees, expenses, and other settlement costs, the fund will pay valid claims from an estimated 10,000 or more Class Members. If you are a Class Member, the exact amount of money you might get will be based on how bad your injuries are, and other factors, for example, how long you

lived, stayed, or visited at HANO housing, your blood lead level, how long your elevated blood lead level lasted, the medical evidence you have or can get, your medical treatments and bills, and the total number of valid Claim Forms received after the settlements are approved. The settlements do not mean that the defendants did anything wrong.

How do you ask for a payment?

First, you must register before **October 20, 2011** at the website or by calling the toll-free number. If the Court approves the settlements, Class Members who register will receive another Notice with a Claim Form. The Claim Form will tell you what you need to prove your claim and receive a payment. You will need evidence, for example a test result that shows you had an elevated blood lead level (>10 µg/dl) when you were six years old or younger and proof you were born on or after December 12, 1987, so you should start now to find these documents.

What are your other options?

You may object to the settlements if you think the Court should not approve them. The Detailed Notice explains how to object properly before the **October 20, 2011** deadline. By that deadline you may also ask to speak at a Fairness Hearing the Court will hold on **December 21, 2011**.

At the Fairness Hearing the Court will consider whether to approve the settlements, and how much to pay the Class lawyers. They will ask the Court for fees and reimbursement of their expenses totaling up to 45% of the Fund, plus \$15,000 each for the five named Plaintiffs and five Class Representatives who provided service in the class action. Significant administration costs are required by the settlements, and will also be deducted from the Fund, but the total cannot be known until Claim Forms are processed. For more information on this case (*Billieson v. City of New Orleans, et al*, No. 94-19231) call toll free, see the website, or write to Billieson Notice Administrator, P.O. Box 2010, Chanhassen, MN 55317-2010.

1-888-768-2043

www.HanoLeadSettlements.com

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Ticket purchasers must be at least 21 years of age. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call 1-877-770-7867.

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Data Around Town

The Wine Bistro is a new hotspot in the city where the grown, sophisticated and sexy come out to experience the champagne life New Orleans style and Data News Weekly was in the house.

Photos by Glenn Summers



For more pictures check us out on Facebook.

Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Ladies in Red

The Ladies In Red Organization held it's Annual Gala at Preservation Hall last Saturday night, and Data Was There!



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Legal Notice

If You are African American and Suffered Farm Loan Discrimination by the USDA between 1981 and 1996,

You may be eligible for money from a \$1.25 billion class action Settlement Fund

(Heirs/Kin may be included)

There is a proposed class action Settlement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) involving racial discrimination against African American farmers between 1981 and 1996. **This Settlement is only for certain people who tried to file a late claim in the original *Pigford* case, or their heirs (kin) and legal representatives.** The current Settlement (sometimes called *Pigford II*) provides benefits to some of those late filers.

Am I included?

You may be included if you:

- Between 1981 and 1996, were discouraged or prevented from applying for or were denied a USDA farm loan or other benefit, or you were given a loan with unfair terms because of racial discrimination,
- Were eligible for a payment in the original *Pigford* case, and
- Submitted a late-filing request that was denied or never considered because it was late.

If you are the heir or kin of someone who died who fits this description, you may file a claim for a payment that would become part of the deceased person's estate. If you are not sure if you (or someone for whom you are the legal representative) are included, please call 1-877-810-8110.

You are not included if you received a payment in the original *Pigford* case.

What does the Settlement provide?

You may be eligible for a substantial cash payment and USDA loan forgiveness from the Settlement. You will need to file a claim to be eligible for these benefits. The claims deadline may be as early as **February 28, 2012**. The Court has appointed lawyers to help you file a claim under the Settlement. You do not have to pay them or anyone else to help you with the claims process. These attorneys will ask the Court for fees and expenses of between 4.1% and 7.4% of the Settlement Fund, and the Court will decide how much they are paid. You may hire your own lawyer, if you wish, at your own expense. If you have questions or need more information, call 1-877-810-8110.

What else should I know?

The Court will hold a hearing on **September 1, 2011** to consider whether to approve the Settlement and a request for attorneys' fees and expenses. If you want to object to or comment on the Settlement or appear at the hearing, you need to file a letter with the Court by **August 12, 2011**. If the Court approves the Settlement, you will not be able to sue the USDA about your farm loan discrimination claims in the future.



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

"Our job is to do everything we can to ensure that businesses can take root and folks can find good jobs and America is leading the global competition that will determine our success in the 21st Century." President Barack Obama

Last week, in Raleigh-Durham, the heart of North Carolina's Research Triangle Park, President Obama received the first set of job-creating recommendations from his 26-member Jobs and Competitiveness Council headed by GE Chairman and CEO, Jeffrey Immelt and American Express Chairman and CEO, Kenneth Chenault. Other members of the Council include the heads of Boeing, Comcast, Southwest Airlines, and the AFL-CIO. In addition to Chenault, other prominent African-American Council members include, Ursula Burns, Chairwoman and CEO of Xerox; Richard Parsons, Chairman of Citigroup; and Roger Ferguson, President and CEO of TIAA-CREF. The President created the Council last February, bringing together the best thinking of large and small business owners and worker-rights advocates in an innovative partnership with government to address the immediate unemployment crisis and improve American competitiveness. We applaud this important collaboration and are encouraged by last week's progress report.

The urgency of the Jobs Council's effort was underscored by the release last week of a National Urban League Policy Institute report entitled, "A Long Road Back to Work: The Realities of Unemployment Since the Great Recession." Our report highlights the disturbing fact that 45.5 percent of unemployed persons have been without jobs for six months or longer, with African-Americans and Latinos faring much worse.

While African-Americans make up 12 percent of the labor force, they comprise 24 percent of the long-term unemployed. Latinos are 15 percent of the labor force and make up 28 percent of the long-term unemployed. Since the likelihood of finding a job decreases the longer one is unemployed, this phenomenon has the potential of creating a permanent class of unemployed citizens.

Clearly, as the National Urban League's 12-point Jobs Rebuild America Plan recommends, we need a dynamic public-private initiative to create jobs and train urban residents for employment in key growth areas, including technology, broadband, manufacturing, and clean energy.

In their report to the President and in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, Chenault and Immelt echoed many of our recommendations. They outlined specific steps to spur job growth in high-potential sectors, while also addressing areas of concentrated unemployment.

They call for stronger partnerships with community colleges and others to train workers for the two-million open jobs in the U.S. that remain unfilled simply because employers can't find workers with the advanced manufacturing skills they need.

They recommend cutting red tape so job-creating construction and infrastructure projects can move forward; boosting jobs in travel and tourism; providing more help to small business owners in need of SBA loans; and putting construction workers back to work upgrading the energy efficiency of commercial buildings.

As Chenault and Immelt point out, obviously more must be done. But these initial recommendations will put us on a path to create millions of jobs. The Jobs Council's report is in stark contrast to those whose only plan is the tried and failed strategy of more tax cuts for the wealthy. The President's Jobs and Competitiveness Council is off to a good start. We will continue to monitor its progress and keep you posted on its work as we continue to push for targeted jobs policies for America's Urban Communities where joblessness is unacceptably high.

Marc H. Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League.

For more information or to begin the claims filing process:

Call: 1-877-810-8110 Visit: www.BlackFarmerCase.com

Kimberly Rivers Roberts

Wading In the Water

by: Edwin Buggage

Kimberly Rivers-Roberts is a woman whose life embodies the words of the African-American Spiritual 'Wade in the Water.' She is someone who has used her gifts to uplift her community and become a voice for the people of her embattled city. "All my life the spirit to give has been in me, but it took Hurricane Katrina to really make me see that I can be a better me and reach for new goals and know I could have a fuller life by giving the best part of me to the world," says Roberts.

Many have become familiar with her story as the star and heroine of "Trouble the Water," the Oscar nominated documentary and winner of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize. Executively produced by Actor, Activist and Humanitarian Danny Glover, other industry heavyweights involved in the project included Carl Dean and Tia Lessin who served as director and producer and has worked with Michael Moore on Fahrenheit 9/11 and Bowling for Columbine.

The film chronicles the life of Roberts and her husband Scott Roberts and their lives during and after Hurricane Katrina, "After leaving New Orleans we were in Alexandria Louisiana and I saw these people filming and begin to talk to them not knowing that it would be something that would change my life," says Roberts of meeting Lessin and Dean. "This movie was not only my story but it was all our stories of overcoming obstacles to rebuild our lives after a tragedy."

During the days of Hurricane Katrina, Roberts helped save the lives of people in the Lower Ninth Ward capturing footage of this horrific event with a hand held video camera, she says of the tumultuous days, "It was a rough time and we were suffering; so we simply did what we had to do not thinking of ourselves as heroes it was just about all of us trying to stay alive."

The success of the movie has catapulted Roberts into worldwide fame; she has traveled the world talking about the story of her life and of her native city. "As I travel the world people always ask how is New Orleans," says Roberts. Continuing she



says, "I tell them we are rebuilding and that we are a strong, beautiful and resilient people and we will rebuild, that is just who we are we can weather any storm."

Through her music she has become a voice for change as the rapper Black Kold Madina, "Music is my life and I've used it to chronicle my journey, what I talk about in my music is aimed at uplifting and inspiring my community." Continuing on the note

of uplift she speaks of what the City needs to be a better city for everyone, "It seems people are concerned about the rebuilding of buildings but this City will never be what it could be without finding a way to build better citizens and this can only happen by providing opportunities and quality education for the people of the City."

Since Hurricane Katrina Roberts have seen her life turn around, "Now that I have seen more I can be more, I just simply think that before I was like many in the City that had limited access and exposure and lived what they saw and didn't think beyond that." Of her transformation she says, "All of the things that's happened although some bad, I am stronger now and better because of it, my life does not have limitations around it and if I can do it I feel anyone can and I am using my example to show people they can change their lives."

In addition to performing she has taken to the lecture circuit as a motivational speaker talking about empowerment, overcoming obstacles to become

a better person and get more out of life. "For all the darkness in my life I have survived and I live today as a living testament that anyone can change and serve their community and that they can be the maker and shaper of their destiny."

JMJ
Joseph M. Jones
Continuing Education Fund



at&t

Explaining Breast Cancer Risk by the Numbers

By the National Cancer Institute

Sometimes it can be difficult to understand people talking about cancer, especially doctors, scientists, and reporters. Part of the reason is because they use so many numbers and statistics without explaining exactly what they mean. A famous philosopher once said that "Mathematics is the language of science." But most of us don't speak that language very well. Here are some ways to think about the numbers that professionals may use when talking about cancer.

For example, many of the numbers you will see or hear about African-American women's risk of breast cancer are a statistic known as incidence. This is a general number that tells you what is

happening out in the world right now. It looks at a group of living people—a group that is large and general enough to be considered "average"—and tells you how many of them got the disease you are talking about.

Many statistics use percentages (%), which means a fractional piece of 100—100 percent of something always means all of it. So if you went to lunch with nine friends and only three of you had wine that would be 30 percent. The incidence of breast cancer in African-American women in a recent year was 126 in 100,000, which means that far fewer than one percent of all African-American women got breast cancer in that year. For 2011, this translates to an estimated 26,840 new cases in the United States.

What is the chance that you will get breast cancer?

Now, what about your own personal risk? If breast cancer runs in your family, your risk will be higher than that of someone who is your same age, if that woman doesn't have close relatives with the disease. This is because family members share important genes and they also tend to live in similar environments. Other personal risk factors, such as your weight, alcohol use, and use of hormone therapy for menopause, can also affect your risk.

Researchers looking back over years of data found that 1 in 10 African-American women will develop some form of breast cancer in their lifetime. Thus, if you forget about the other risk factors mentioned in the last paragraph,

your lifetime personal risk is 10 percent.

But, this number doesn't tell you what your own risk might be because you cannot forget about all of those other factors that raise or lower your risk. But, if you include only your age (with all other personal characteristics averaged out); there are accurate statistics to consider.

When you think of your risk of developing breast cancer over the next one year from age 40 through ages 70, the numbers are much smaller, though they do increase each year. For age 40, the risk is 1 in 1040 (one-tenth of 1 percent). For age 50, risk is 1 in 519 (one-fifth of 1 percent). For age 60, risk is 1 in 343 (three-tenths of 1 percent).

The numbers can be confusing, and you have a right to understand what professionals may be telling you about your health. So don't hesitate to ask them to explain until you really get the message.

NCI leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH effort to dramatically reduce the burden of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI web site at www.cancer.gov or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).



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Rethink Possible



Cover Story, Continued from page 3.

ments within the city that didn't want certain people to come back and we stood up strong for that."

Nagin, New Orleans and his Place in History

As the story after Katrina is still unfolding, this latest book is part of its saga told by a man who stood on the frontlines. What will people years from now think when they view the man who captained the City of New Orleans during its darkest days. In a moment of self-reflection Nagin says, "I will probably be viewed as an 'out of the box' kind of mayor." Continuing of his unique position in public life and in history he says, "I was one of the first Mayor's of New Orleans in modern times to be elected without ever holding an elected seat. And the Katrina thing of course and I hope that I would be known as someone who after a tragedy was able to help bring a city that a lot of people thought was dead back to life."

One of the moments of course steeped in history is his famous two-word point not lost on Nagin, "Some would say 'Chocolate City Speech' but in its historical relevance and significance will be based on what side you were on at the time, for some they would

say it woke me up to some of things that was going on in the city and motivated me to come back while others may say it was divisive although that was not my intent."

And as the city continues moving ahead and "for better or worse" Nagin is still hopeful that bridges of understanding can be erected and that everyone can prosper in a rebuilt New Orleans. Of this day of healing and reconciliation one he hopes come to pass he says, "After every storm there is a period of calm and even rainbows and I remember when Maya Angelou came to New Orleans she said you have to go through the storms to see the rainbows." As a smile comes on his face he continues by saying to the people whose lives forever changed nearly six years ago, "Just think back to where you were during Katrina, think what you went through and where this city was and look at it now, today." "We are almost rebuilt and while some are still struggling to get back they are being taken care of wherever they are and they still have the opportunity to come back. Remember this is your city and don't ever give up on it."

Health Care Law Glitch Opens Medicaid To Millions Of Middle-Class Americans

WASHINGTON – President Barack Obama's Health Care Law would let several million middle-class people get nearly free insurance meant for the poor, a twist government number crunchers say they discovered only after the complex bill was signed.

The change would affect early retirees: A married couple could have an annual income of about \$64,000 and still get Medicaid, said officials who make long-range cost estimates for the Health and Human Services Department.

Up to 3 million more people could qualify for Medicaid in 2014 as a result of the anomaly. That's because, in a major change from today, most of their Social Security benefits would no longer be counted as income for determining eligibility. It might be compared to allowing middle-class people to qualify for food stamps.

Medicare chief actuary Richard Foster says the situation keeps him up at night.

"I don't generally comment on the pros or cons of policy, but that just doesn't make sense," Foster said during a question-and-answer session at a recent professional society meeting.

"This is a situation that got no attention at all," added Foster. "And even now, as I raise the issue with various policymakers, people are not rushing to say ... we need to do something about this."

Indeed, administration officials and senior Democratic lawmakers say it's not a loophole but the result of a well-meaning effort to simplify rules for deciding who will get help with insurance costs under the new health care law. Instead of a hodgepodge of rules, there will be one national policy.

"This simplification will stop people from falling into coverage gaps and may cause some to be newly eligible for Medicaid and others to no longer qualify," said Brian Cook, spokesman for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

But states have been clamoring for relief from Medicaid costs, complaining that just these sorts of federal rules drive up spending and limit state options. The program is now one of the top issues in budget negotiations between the White House and Congress.



Republicans are pushing for a rollback of federal requirements that block states from limiting eligibility.

Medicaid is a safety net program that serves more than 50 million vulnerable Americans, from low-income children and pregnant women to Alzheimer's patients in nursing homes. It's designed as a federal-state partnership, with Washington paying close to 60 percent of the total cost.

Early retirees would be a new group for Medicaid. While retirees can now start collecting Social Security at age 62, they must wait another three years to get Medicare, unless they're disabled.

Some early retirees who worked all their lives may not want to be associated with a Health Care Program for the poor, but others might see it as a relatively painless way to satisfy the new law's requirement that all Americans carry medical insurance starting in 2014. It would help tide them over until they turn 65 and qualify for Medicare.

The actuary's office said the 3 million early retirees who would become eligible for Medicaid are on top of an estimated 16 million to 20 million people that Obama's

law would already bring into the program, by opening it to childless adults with incomes near the poverty level. Federal taxpayers will cover all of the initial cost of the expansion.

A spokeswoman for the Senate Finance Committee, which wrote much of the Health Care Law, said if the situation does become a problem there's plenty of time to fix it later.

"These changes don't take effect until 2014, so we have time to review all possible cases to ensure Medicaid meets its mission of serving only the neediest Americans," said Erin Shields.

But Republicans already see a problem.

Former Utah Governor Mike Leavitt said adding early retirees will "just add fuel to the fire," bolstering the argument from Republican governors that some of Washington's rules don't make sense.

"The fact that this is being discovered now tells you, what else is baked into this law?" said Leavitt, who served as Health and Human Services Secretary under President George H.W. Bush. "It clearly begins to reveal that the nature of the law

was to put more and more people under eligibility for government insurance."

The Medicare actuary's office roughed out some examples to illustrate how the provision would work. A married couple retiring at 62 in 2014 and receiving the maximum Social Security benefit of \$23,500 each could get \$17,000 from other sources and still qualify for Medicaid with a total income of \$64,000.

That \$64,000 would put them at about four times the federal poverty level, which for a two-person household is \$14,710 this year. The Medicaid expansion in the Health Care Law was supposed to benefit childless adults with incomes up to 133 percent of the poverty level. A fudge factor built into the law bumps that up to 138 percent.

The actuary's office acknowledged its \$64,000 example would represent an unusual case, but nonetheless the hypothetical couple would still qualify for Medicaid.



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