

THE DRINK TANK PRESENTS A STRANGE COINCIDENCE

First off, if any of you are in the storm's path or have people in harm's way, I hope it works out and all remain well. Hurricane Katrina is a wild beat and it's terrifying to think of it crashing into the US Gulf Coast.

Strangely, as I was watching the coverage (and I was watching religiously last night and woke up early to see coverage this morning) I realised that I had seen much of this before. I also realised that I'd written a bit about it in The Drink Tank. The fact is, this was the opening minutes of the FX TV Movie Oil Storm! that showed in June.

The story was very interesting and pretty scary. See if this sounds at all familiar: a fictional Category 6 (There is no six, but I understood that they meant a Bad Mamajama of a Storm) Hurricane called Julia hit New Orleans and put Port Fourchon out of the business of producing oil for a goodly long time. Just a couple of months later, Hurricane Katrina, a bad mamajama of a storm, even if they didn't create a new class for it, slammed into the Gulf Coast and stopped production at Port Fourchon. It didn't destroy the area, as they said in Oil Storm, but still, there was damage and a

stoppage.

If that was the end of the similarities, I'd say that everyone knew that was bound to happen at some point, but there's more.

In Oil Storm, the Superdome is



used as an evacuation centre. In reality, the Superdome was used as an evacuation centre. I seem to remember that the Superdome was used in a 1998 Hurricane as well. In Oil Storm, a mandatory evacuation was declared for all

of New Orleans, something that had never happened in the history of the city (though I believe that there was an order to evacuate before the Battle of New Orleans, but NO wasn't really a city at that point). The Mayor declare a mandatory evacuation on Sunday. In Oil Storm, there was a long line of traffic and lots of price gouging. The actual gouging got so bad that they over-loaded the circuits on the Anit-Price Gouging Hotline they installed. There were long lines out of the city in both as well. Oil prices rise first as the storm approaches and then continue to increase as the storm made landfall. That specific scenario played out in reality with Oil attaining a new All-Time High.

Those above conditions could be accounted for by looking at past evacuations and the like, but the number of shown coincidences and even the time frame sorta creep me out. It's almost prophetic the accuracy of the predictions.



If that accuracy continues, we may all be screwed.

You see, the next step in Oil Storm is that America is hit with ever-increasing oil prices. The makers even chose to show the passage of time via oil and gas prices and their ever-alarming increases. Within a week gas is beyond 5 bucks a gallon. There's a general shortage and we start to see gas lines again. The costs keep increasing with a long series of catastrophic events that end up with oil being so expensive that there are serious ramifications in the farming industry (due to the high price of petroleum-based fertilizers) and the naturals like trucking and the like. The Presidents approval rating actually seems to slip below 20%, I think they mention at some point. That may be an understatement.

The entire country sinks into the depths of a mini-depression and ends up with a lot of activism. Terrorists also latch on to the troubles and bomb an oil production facility in Saudi Arabia which causes prices to go higher. A serious wreck at the Port of Houston also adds to the hurt. All these things are highly unlikely to happen now, but it's not out of the question.

We don't know what the damage level is to the oil derricks off the Louisiana Coast. We also don't know if the explosion in oil prices that the Hurricane initially brought will stay around. We also don't know what the damage to the insurance industry will be, and



that was another point they showed in Oil Storm. We're likely to see serious repercussions, but it would take some miraculous mismanagement and bad timing to repeat those things that were shown in Oil Storm.

Then again, it has happened before. Of course I'm referring to *The Wreck of the Titan of Futility* by Morgan Robertson.

The Wreck of the Titan was written in the late 1890s and detailed the wreck of the Largest, most unsinkable ship in the world at the hands of an iceberg. The book was pretty popular, popular enough to get a reissuing with slightly changed details in 1912, the year the Titanic went down. The similarities are pretty incredible, especially since so many of the number match up.

And as I think will be much the case with Hurricane Katrina and Oil Storm, the number of deaths were much higher in the fictional piece than in reality. Only 13 people survived the Titan going down while more than 600 survived the Titanic.

So, that's out there. I've been full intending to name Oil Storm on my Best Dramatic Presentation list and now I might have to add it to me Best Preemptive Non-Fiction list!

This Issue of The Drink Tank Present was written as the Eye of the Hurricane was at Long 89.6 W, Lat 30.8 N.