



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANDERSON

**CENTRAL CITY:** People walk away with bags of clothing from Coleman's Retail Store and furniture from Universal Furniture on Earhart Boulevard during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

# Widespread looting hits abandoned businesses

*Lack of police after storm leaves stores vulnerable*

By **Walt Philbin**  
Staff writer

High waters from Hurricane Katrina made law enforcement difficult but provided loads – truckloads in some cases – of opportunity for looters. At midafternoon Monday, a parade of looters streamed from Coleman's Retail Store at 4001 Earhart Blvd. The looters, men and women who appeared to be in their early teens to mid-40s, braved a steady rain and infrequent tropical-storm-force winds to tote away boxes of clothing and shoes from the store. Some had garbage bags stuffed with goods. Others lugged wardrobe-sized boxes or carried them on their heads. The line going to and from the store along Earhart numbered into the dozens and appeared to be growing. Some looters were seen smiling and greeting each other with pleasantries as they passed. Another group was seen riding in the back of a pickup truck, honking

the horn and cheering. The scene also attracted a handful of curious bystanders, who left the safety of their homes to watch the heist. But no police were present in the area, which was flooded with water two to four feet deep on all sides of Earhart. Looting also was reported at the Winn-Dixie just outside the French Quarter, near the Iberville public housing complex. In Mid-City, people waded through waist-deep water on the way to loot the Shell station at South Jefferson Davis Parkway and Tulane Avenue. Three people even trudged through the water pulling a blue and white boat down Tulane, apparently to make it easier to haul goods away from the station's convenience store. And they weren't the first to get there. Minutes before, a pair of teenagers floated two rubber trashcans full of beer, hard liquor and other plunder toward the South Jefferson Davis Parkway overpass over I-10. When they reached dry roadway on the span, they abandoned the garbage cans and carried the contents away in blue plastic bags. One of the young men even shucked a pair of wet jeans when they fell to his ankles and walked away in a red bathing suit.



STAFF PHOTO BY TED JACKSON

**CENTRAL CITY:** Items are removed from the Coleman's Retail Store at 4001 Earhart Blvd. People braved a steady rain and infrequent tropical storm wind gusts to tote boxes of clothing and shoes from the store.



**CENTRAL CITY:** Coleman's merchandise goes out the door Monday. Another group was seen riding in the back of a pickup truck, honking the horn and cheering.



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**CENTRAL CITY:** People abscond with bags of unpurchased merchandise.

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