

New Orleans Saints Head Coach Jim Haslett
September 14, 2005
Conference Call

Re: When are you planning to come up to New York?

When do I plan on coming up? Sunday evening.

Re: Have you found it strange preparing and getting organized for this game?

Actually, it has worked out pretty well because we gave the players two days off and I understand Coach Coughlin did the same thing. Our players on Monday and Tuesday looked for places to live and we brought their cars in from New Orleans. So, really it was good for those guys so they can get settled into a place where they could live for the rest of the year.

Re: Their own cars?

Well, all the cars when we left San Jose were at the facility. And Mr. Benson got car carriers and whatever cars were there brought them out to everybody.

Re: What about yourself as far as settling in? What have you done?

I got a place. I don't know what the hell you call it, an apartment, condo, something. It's not the biggest place but you know you don't need much as a coach. You just need a place to drive back and forth to and fall asleep for a couple of hours.

Re: What's this whole experience been like having so many people's lives turned completely upside down and now having to focus on football and trying to get something accomplished at the same time?

It's something I have never gone through and hopefully no one ever has to go through it again. It's hard to explain. It still is. Geez, I can't even explain it. There were so many things that were going on with people's lives, property, their loved ones back home, the unknown, the uncertainty of everything going on, and then trying to play a football game, it was hard. It was hard on myself, it was hard on the players. One thing about our team, our team is pretty resilient and we've done a pretty good job of handling every situation with four buildings, four complexes in four weeks. We have had no cars, we have bussed to practice. All the little inadequacies and hardships we've had really don't mean anything compared to what is going on in the Gulf and what happened in the city.

Re: How much flexible have you had to be as guys tried to get home and do charitable things and find family members? How flexible have you had to be?

I have played the game long and I have been around it long enough that there are more important things than football in your life. And obviously your mother, your father, and

New Orleans Saints Wide Receiver Joe Horn
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Re: How have the last couple of weeks changed your perspective on football and life in general?

Well, it hasn't changed it much, because I'm a guy who – nothing surprises me. Nothing shocks me. Of course Mother Nature and God's plan on this planet doesn't shake me and surprise me. I know I am a professional football player and I know that hurricanes happen, earthquakes happen, tornadoes happen, and lives are lost daily and that's a part of life. So, it really hasn't changed me as a person. I kind of expect anything.

Re: So, you haven't had any trouble focusing on the job at hand throughout all this?

No. It's been a little difficult outside the football field having to get your family situated, having to find a new home, having to help people who are homeless right now, having to visit the shelters and see homeless people, it's hard. It's emotionally a strain on me as far off the football field, but once I get on that football field, once I go through those gates, it's a whole new atmosphere.

Re: How much time each week do players get to attend to personal issues?

Well, we have to handle things on the run. We have to take care of things on the run. When you have a schedule that's your job as far as being at practice, you have to do that. But, when we are off practice and we have a couple of hours of time to handle our situation, handle our business, that's what we have to do. We are just taking it day by day, every hour, and every free day we get we're trying to handle our personal issues and that's just what we have to do. We can't stop living because if you do that, you are not going to have a job.

Re: Joe where are you right now?

In Gold's Gym.

Re: Are you San Antonio? Where exactly are you? What town are you in?

San Antonio.

Re: Were you guys pleased with the technical aspect of how you played on Sunday?

No.

Re: Why not?

Because we should have beat a football team by 14 points. On the offensive side of the ball we weren't very good. Don't get me wrong, we were glad we got a W (win). We were glad we got a win. But on the offensive side of the ball, we could have done some things better and we let some opportunities slip by that we shouldn't have let slip by like being on the 5-yard line and having a chance to go up 21-7. We could have put that game out of reach a long time before we actually let it be a football game in the fourth quarter. So, we were disappointed with that and there are some things I'm sure our defense had some opportunities where we could have had interceptions and made it a superb game and we didn't do that. So, we're not happy how we did in all aspects of the game, but we're happy we got a victory.

Re: This game on Monday night is a different setting and time. Is that going to be a factor at all do you think?

No, no. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if we played at 3:00 in the morning, man, 4:00 in the morning. It doesn't matter. You still have to do your job. You have to find a way to play four hours of football – hard-core, hard-nose football – to help your football team win a game regardless of the circumstances, regardless of what you go through in life. If you're paid by the NFL and the money that they pay us, we have to find a way to get our job done. Do I want to play at home and be in New Orleans in the Dome with the 75,000 Saints fans screaming for me? Of course, without a doubt. But, it's not that way. That's just the way it is right now. We have to go New York and whether we have to or had to play in New York eight games, ten games, 15 games, guess what? This football team has to find a way to beat whoever we play, wherever we play them.

Re: Are guys renting houses or condominiums now?

Some guys are renting, some guys are buying. I'm getting ready to buy a house. Guys are taking care of what they feel necessary for their families or their significant others that they have to take care of.

Re: In regard to preferring to play home games at San Antonio rather than going to LSU?

Well, you want to play games where your home base is. We're here. Of course to play a game here in San Antonio, home games here after we would have to ride five to ten minutes to our homes. We could ride right down the street to a restaurant and have dinner. That's the luxury of playing home games. You have your fans right here in the Houston area, in the San Antonio area, and the surrounding areas – Baton Rouge -- that can come and see you play if they wanted to. So, of course playing here in San Antonio and in San Antonio, Texas fans they love us also. So, playing here is definitely what the guys want to do, but we can't make that decision obviously. The players aren't the ones who decide where we play. That's unfortunate, but that's the way it is in the NFL.

Re: When you were visiting with some of the people that were left homeless by the Hurricane, did you get a sense that the Saints have become important to them by continuing to play and winning games is something that they can look forward to?

Well, we've been important to our fans. Our fans love us regardless of whether Hurricane Katrina came or not. It came, it was devastating to the area. It was devastating to Alabama and Mississippi. So, yes, we want to play football to give them something, to give them some kind of hope, to give their children something to watch and something to be proud of. So, before the hurricane got here, I keep saying this, before the hurricane got here, we were focused. The New Orleans Saints football was focused to try and win a Super Bowl. By the hurricane coming and the homeless people that are here now watching us play, it gives us a little more initiative to play harder and play smarter and go out and win a Super Bowl. So, I don't want you guys to get this feeling that just because Hurricane Katrina came, now all of a sudden the Saints football team wants to start winning football games. No, that's totally what we had in store. We wanted to win football games in January. The last game we played against the Carolina Panthers and we had the opportunity to go to the playoffs, we knew we shot ourselves in the foot and we messed around last year and didn't go to the playoffs. We had a mindset to come and try to win a Super Bowl. But, our hearts still go out to the families and lost loved ones that we had in New Orleans, and of course, we're trying to put them on our back and do what we plan to do before the season started.

Re: You had mentioned at the beginning of the call that you expect things to happen, you know bad things happen, but you try and kind of stay level and fight through adversity like that. Have you always been that way as far as your approach to life?

I'm from the projects man. I've never had anything but a loving family, loving brothers and sisters, and friends that I came up through this hard life that I live with. So, I have always struggled. My family wasn't able at that time. My mother was divorced and with six or seven kids in the house. So, I have always had to struggle where I wanted to be and I'm blessed and I thank God for me having to struggle to do that. So, now when things happen like this, like when the devastation happened and things come across my path, it doesn't scare me, it doesn't throw me off, and it doesn't confuse me because I know this is life and I have experienced things like this before football even came in my life.

Re: Do you take it upon yourself just to be like an anchor?

Sure, sure. Definitely. I always feel like an anchor for my football team. Of course. We have six or seven anchors, veteran leaders, on this team. And I respect those guys and I love those guys, but I when I went to the shelters I just kept telling the people, especially the people from Louisiana: hold on, just keep holding on. Take care of your family, guys stay together. If you see a baby walking, if you see a three-year old baby walking and see a mom that's tired, pick that baby up and take that baby with the mother and find some milk for them. And those guys promised me that they would try to take care of everybody sticking together. That's all I asked for. What they asked: Joe, you guys go

and do what have you been doing. Play football games, win football games and that's what I can respect out of those conversations.

Re: You missed a year of football in 1992 I believe it was when you worked in a furniture factory?

Because I didn't assert myself in high school like I should have. Academically I didn't hit the books like I should have so I went to junior college two years. I went to junior college two years and went down to junior college not knowing how to put my eggs in order and take care of my academic side of the book. I went down there and was thinking football before thinking academics. At that time when you go to a junior college, the coaches all they care about is putting you on the football field, winning football games. Education to some of them is not even what they care about at that time. They want to win national championships on the junior college level and in the ACC-SEC whatever. I'm not saying football coaches want their players to have degrees, I'm not saying that, I'm just saying there are some football coaches, whether it's junior college, whether it's any other level of college play care about football more than they do academics. And that's what I got involved with – I was in the junior college where I didn't assert myself like I should have. I shouldn't have cared about a head football coach leading me the right way. And I got down there and wasn't able to get my academics like I should have and I went to the Canadian Football League. And I had to do whatever I had to do whether it was wash dishes, get a job at Burger King, Pizza Hut, to get a paycheck to take care of what I had to take care of.

Re: Was that your family that you had to take care of pretty much?

Of course, yeah. At that the time, I had a little girl and I had gotten married and worked at a furniture factory with my father-in-law, who got me the job at a furniture factory. So, I sprayed furniture and worked from nine to five everyday, eight to five everyday, trying to take care of my family.

Re: You weren't eligible for the NFL draft at that point, right?

Actually, I played Canadian League Football my junior year that I was supposed to be in college. Well after that Canadian League Football year, we were thinking – me and my agent Ralph Vitolo – that I could go and enter the NFL draft, but they told me that I wasn't eligible, I was still a senior in college and I had to workout for NFL teams.

Re: So, that's why you went to the CFL?

Right, right.

Re: This Monday night the game is going to be a little different, you guys will be wearing your home-black uniforms and one of the endzone's will be painted in Saints colors. There will be some New Orleans flavor they say. Is that going to mean anything to you guys?

It will, it will. It'll give us a little sense they care about us that they wanted our home game to be in New Orleans, but because of the devastation it couldn't be there. It's cool. We're in New York and don't get me wrong, the New York Giants are still playing a home game. Now, everybody sheep skin over their eyes and act like it's not a home game for the Giants, that's cool but we all know in New Orleans that instead it's a New York Giant home football game on Monday night. But, if people want to dress it up that way and make us feel like we are at home, I'm sure the fans and the New York Giants football club care about what happened that their heart goes out to us and for them to give us a part of the end zone and make it look like it's a home game, we will appreciate that, but we're also not crazy in knowing that it's a home. For, #87 I know that when I get on that football field, it's a home game for the New York Giants.

Re: What was the reception like on the road last week and what do you think that will be like around the country as you go through your season?

Oh I think the fans will welcome us with open arms. There were lives that were lost here in this hurricane. They feel for us. We're from New Orleans. So, they feel our heart, they feel our pain, they feel the fans' pain. So, of course this country is a great country. They are going to welcome us with open arms and to what I'm hearing we are supposed to be the new America's team. And you know what? That's fine because that's what America's all about. It's about people bonding together, getting together. When that situation with September 11th happened, my heart went out to everyone from that area in New York. I wanted to do everything I could to help them. The firemen, the policemen, the people who lost their families. Us coming there and the fans clapping for us, giving us a standing ovation, that's love and that's respect for the country and I appreciate it.

Re: Can you put to words what it's been like since everybody realized how devastating the hurricane was?

I'm going to put it into the words and again I've quoted this almost 25 times and I hope Martin Lawrence won't get upset with me for quoting what he said on his show. 'No one is immune to the trials and tribulations of life.' And that's what it was. There was a time that happened. It was time for Katrina, it was a time for it to categorically hit a part of New Orleans. And guess what? It happened. We have to understand that. We have to pick up the broken pieces and try to put them back together, get this thing situated, let the cleanup that's happening in New Orleans keep on happening and everybody move back to the city and like President Bush said, 'It'll be a shining example for the whole world to see.'

New Orleans Saints Owner Tom Benson
Monday, September 12, 2005

Opening Statements: “We have just returned from a meeting in Baton Rouge with Louisiana State officials and other representatives of the National Football League. Among them were the Chancellor and President of LSU and their Director of Football Operations along with NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue. I can confirm that the city of San Antonio is the site of three of our football games they are the Buffalo Bills on October 2nd, the Atlanta Falcons one of our archrivals, and on Christmas Eve we will be here to play the Detroit Lions. These games should be televised nationally and will give this city the great media attention it deserves for what they did for the New Orleans Saints. I just can’t thank you enough, it has just been outstanding. The people here in this dome have just bent over backwards twenty-four hours a day since we have been here helping us. We have moved our whole staff and they have welcomed us. We have gotten in their way with the events going on here and I just can’t say enough nice things about them and what they did. It has just been really great. I think that helped us with that win on Sunday.”

“It is most important for everyone involved to make certain that capacity crowds attend every game that we have here. This is something brand new that has never happened before to a National Football League team. I expect these games to be televised nationally and will make not only me proud of our football team but can also make the Mayor proud of the city and able to show what a great city you have here in San Antonio.”

“This effort and this schedule will help rebuild Louisiana and the Gulf South. After visiting over there today, the only hope they have left is this football team and they need us. Someone told me today that the fact that we played good football on Sunday left everybody feeling better. Some of them maybe didn’t get to watch it on television or couldn’t get to a radio but everybody in the Gulf South right now knows what happened in that football game. We intend to present a first class football team and I am going to tell you this, it will be first class all the way to the Super Bowl and I hope you have that on the record. I want to thank you for all of your help and now let’s prove what we all know.”

Q: What about if the Saints make the playoffs? Where will those games be played?

Benson: “A little over two weeks ago we were in California and had just played the Raiders and we didn’t know where we were going. Let’s not worry about that one right now let’s just win the rest of these games and that is what we are going to do and the playoffs will take care of themselves.”

Q: How do the people of San Antonio get tickets to the games?

Benson: “We will have that up and running soon. We just got this news and made the decision at about one o’clock this afternoon and we just had a staff meeting before this to inform our people about the details and they are putting everything into action right now. Tomorrow we will make some announcement on how that is going to be handled.”

Q: Did you talk to the Commissioner of the NFL today about your long term plans for this team?

Benson: “Yeah I talked to him right through the super bowl. That is what we talked about. I said get ready because the Super Bowl is in Detroit this year and we are going to be there. That was our long term plan right now. We are going to worry about the present and get our football team ready for every game just like we did for this last game.”

Injury Update: *Ernie Conwell's jaw (x-ray) was negative. He had a dislocated jaw that popped back in place, also a wrist. Both MRI's were negative. He'll be questionable for the game. Az (Zahir) Hakim re-injured his hamstring. He'll also be questionable for the game. Besides that, we came out of it okay."*

Q: Can you talk about the mood of the team yesterday and how it translated?

A: *"To be honest, our players ended it last year that way. Our last four games of the year, we played with a lot of emotion. We practiced well and we ended up winning the last four games of the year. It was really a carryover to this week. It was kind of what they started last year. They started off that way in practice. It just carried over to the game. Obviously the hurricane hitting the city played into it, but really the way we practiced started last year. To answer your question, I don't think it will be a problem. They'll be excited about playing on Monday night. They'll be excited about the opportunity to play in New York and hopefully we can continue to keep playing well."*

Q: Was the smash mouth style of football played on Sunday by design?

A: *"Yes, I thought we did a lot of good things. There are a lot of things that we can do better. I don't think we played real smart in some areas, pitching the ball with 14 seconds left on an interception or fumble, whatever they want to call it. They did in the first time for a long time, but we did for the first time in a long time take the opening drive and went down and scored. We hadn't done that in a while. We didn't have a lot of yards rushing. They ate up clock and opened up some other avenues in the passing game. We did a good job of stopping the run for the most part except for a couple of plays and that's what we're trying to get accomplished. We played really well on special teams."*

Q: Can you discuss the play of Jason Craft in the nickel package?

A: *"First off, Steve Smith is a great football player and he is a hard one to cover and he had eight catches for a bunch of yards. I thought that when time counted in the fourth quarter, all three of those corners, Jason Craft, Fakhir Brown and Mike McKenzie, that's when they played their best in the fourth quarter. We played a lot of man to man in the game. We tried to match the receivers up as tight as we could, because Jake (Delhomme) throws it up there and he throws it in a window and they had some great catches. There were some great throws also."*

Q: What was your reaction to the team's home schedule?

A: *"I just heard we were playing four in Baton Rouge and three here (San Antonio). You're going to play the first one in Giants Stadium. I said it last week; we're pretty good on the road, so we just won another one on the road. Whatever it takes to win games. My job is to try to get them ready to play where they're going to play, so I'm not really worried about the location. It would have been nice to play here because people have their families here, players have their families here and the least travel the better, but like I said, we play pretty good on the road, so we'll see how it comes out."*

Q: Haven't you been pretty vocal about wanting to play home games at San Antonio? Are you surprised the NFL didn't acknowledge that a little bit more?

A: *"Again, I know what their agenda was. They would like us to play in our home state and our players like that too to be honest with you. It's just more of a travel issue and a family issue, but I'm sure our families and their families and friends will go to Baton Rouge to see the game and go be with them."*

Q: Was it purposeful for the Christmas Eve game to be in San Antonio?

A: *"I didn't know the Christmas Eve game was here. I just know we got to play the Giants in Giants Stadium this week. To be honest with you, we got Minnesota after that and then I don't know."*

Q: Do you know the team is playing on Christmas Eve against Detroit in San Antonio?

A: *"Are they playing Saturday still? I got a short week to prepare."*

Q: How will it feel for the fans in New Orleans to be able to attend four games in Baton Rouge?

A: *"First of all, the time frames, it gives them time to get tickets if they would like to come see us play. I think there's enough time, because it's not right away. I think it gives them some time to get tickets or do whatever they got to do to get in the stadium. That's important. That's a big stadium; I think 95,000 it holds, so it would be nice if there were 95,000 Saints fans. It would be one of the largest NFL crowds in a while if they fill it."*

Q: How would you describe the mood in the locker room prior to the game?

A: *"I think it was like any other game. Our players were really excited about playing this game and all week they talked about it and were into it. We had three really good practices and I don't think it was different than any other*

time except there were a lot of things. It was a long time coming. We had a great off-season. We worked really well in the off-season. We had minicamps in the off-season, the OTA's. The last two weeks have felt like six months, so, I think it was just relief that they had the opportunity to play in a regular season game. I know I was looking forward to it and I think that was the big thing where they were looking towards the opportunity to be playing."

Q: *Is it good that you don't have to worry for another week where the team will play?*

A: *"I don't worry about those things. I don't think anybody does. The football field is always the same length and the same distance. Hopefully we have an opportunity to play in front of our own fans, but they're still road games, so I'm going to keep telling them that because our road record is pretty good."*

Q: *Have you been to Tiger Stadium before?*

A: *"I've never been on the campus of LSU before. It's weird with me coaching this long and the many players that have come out of LSU, I've never been on the campus."*

Q: *Does it really matter that on some occasions there could be a quick turnaround between an LSU game and a Saints game?*

A: *"I'm sure the grounds crews will take good care of the fields and one thing about Louisiana, it is not hard to grow grass and get it fixed up and ready to grow the next day. Stuff grows fast down there."*

Q: *How have the players adjusted to San Antonio?*

A: *"First our players are all resilient. All they need is a place to live and a car. Those guys, about 40 of them went out to dinner at some place I never heard of out by the airport yesterday, so they've already scoped the city out. Players adjust as well to different environments. As long as they can get around and have a place to sleep. It is a nice city. The thing I liked about the city is that they have done a great job of taking care of us, the players, everybody's so nice and they're very accommodating from the hotel to the Alamodome. Everybody's willing to do whatever to keep us happy and we really do appreciate it."*

Q: *Have you talked to Mayor Nagin since after the game?*

A: *"We've talked. We've missed each other four or five times. He called last night. I called back. He called this morning. I called back. We never really touched base."*

Q: *Since you like it here so much, are you ready to relocate?*

A: *"That's not up to me. That's up to our owner. That's a touchy subject. We get a lot of people back home that are counting on this football team and to give them hope and obviously to bring some joy into their life every Sunday and whatever Saturday's we play and whatever Monday nights we play and right now, I think that's the furthest thing from our mind. We're going to try to get in the playoffs this year and we'll figure out what's going on after that."*

Q: *Can you discuss what you've seen of the Giants?*

A: *"They're a much better football team. I thought what I've seen of them, what I've watched in the off-season. We watched a lot of the Giants in the off-season, the quarterback (Eli Manning) really improved from the time we got there until the last eight games of the year. I think that's when they made their dramatic jump at the end of the year. With the addition of (Kareem) McKenzie and (Chris) Snee playing their second year, I think their line is a heck of a line. Tiki Barber is as good as they get, add Plaxico (Burress) to the mix with Amani (Toomer) and (Jeremy) Shockey. They got a pretty good offense. On defense, they did the same thing. They got (William) Joseph playing well. They added (Kendrick) Clancy and I think they got a heck of a group of linebackers. They've always had a good group of corners in Will (Petersen) and (Will) Allen. (Brent) Alexander kind of runs the show. I think it's a good team and I didn't watch the game yet from yesterday, but they must have scored a couple of special teams scores. The defense did a good job, so I think they're a much better team and I know that they expect and what coach (Tom) Coughlin expects from that team."*

Q: *How much will the week leading up to the Monday night game be a normal week for you?*

A: *"Everybody has Tuesday off to get all their personal issues out of the way, the players and coaches. Monday's Monday. Tuesday no longer exists. Wednesday's Tuesday. Thursday's Wednesday and it goes on, so it's really, tomorrow's the day that they need to get their housing, cars, banking, anything they needed, anything to get done, so they can worry about football the rest of the year."*

Q: *Is this a regular week for you personally?*

A: *"No, coaches will work normally today and Monday. They got to come in here for a while and do some things with their offices and Wednesday we'll go to work like Tuesday, so it's not going to be a hindrance to us whatsoever. It'd kind of boring."*

Q: *A graph yesterday said that you have one of the most experienced teams in the NFL. Did that play a role in yesterday's win?*

A: *"I got to disagree with you. I don't know. We got a lot of young players on this team. We drafted a lot of guys the last two or three years that are starting to play for us. We got a kicker (John Carney) who's 42, a couple guys. I don't think we have a lot of old guys on our team. Our linebacker crew, we got two second year guys and a fourth year guy. Our secondary, we really don't have a lot of age on us at all."*

Q: *Can you talk about the role that Gene Upshaw played to influence the possibility of games being played in San Antonio?*

A: *"I don't know. I know what the players wishes were so if they took them to Gene, obviously Gene didn't get it accomplished. I'm not really sure what Gene's role was with the Commissioner or Mr. Benson and what he said. I really don't know. I have no idea."*

Q: *What did you think of Upshaw's and the Players Association's stance?*

A: *"That's their job. Being an ex-player, I would want the head of the player's association to do whatever they can for this football team based on the circumstances."*

family and your kids are more important than football and your faith is more important than football. I think I was smart enough to realize that they needed to do things, take care of things, use the phone when they had to use the phone. I think everything has worked out fairly well.

Re: For a team to win a game like you guys did on Sunday after having gone through everything, I would imagine that there have been certain guys that have stepped forward as leaders and kept the team focused through all of this? Who have those guys been?

Well, I think our whole team has done a great job. There are certain guys, the captains of our football team, who have done a good job. I really think that every single player on our football team has done a good job under the situation. Nobody's complaining about what we're doing and what we're going through. They have understood that it's going to be different until we get into some type of normal routine, if we can ever get into a normal routine. So, it's been good. I think everybody has really stepped up. I don't think it's just one or two guys. I think it is everybody.

Re: Do you feel that your players have a bit of a sanctuary on the field with the tragedy that has been going on?

Well, I think that's the way it has been the last couple of weeks. Once we get in the meetings, it takes their mind off it. Once they get on the field, it takes their minds off it. And obviously when they get up and go home and flip around the T.V., it kind of changes because reality sets in. But, for the most part, our guys have focused in fairly well in practice and done a great job in the meetings. I think that's all you can pretty much ask for from a football coach's perspective.

Re: On Monday night the game will have a bit of a different feel, you'll be in your home uniforms and there will be some Saints stuff on the field. One of the end zones will be painted Saints. There will be some stuff that makes it feel like New Orleans a little bit. Is that going to mean anything to you guys?

They don't need to make us feel anything like the Florida leagues or anything. They can just leave – this is a home game for the Giants and we'll leave it that way. But you know what? It doesn't really bother us because we have a pretty good road record over the five years we've been here. We have played pretty good on the road. Our guys kind of like us versus the world mentality and we'll handle it. We'd rather play at home and in the Superdome, but obviously that wasn't our choice.

Re: Is it hard to have that us versus the world mentality in a way when you are coming into stadiums where people are going to be cheering for you? It's almost like the fans aren't going to be hostile, they're going to be the opposite and I wonder if it's going to be hard to get up that 'us versus the world' or are you getting that from a different place?

I thought it was very emotional the other day when they announced our team and we came out and they cheered for us. So, I was kind of surprised and taken back by it and very appreciative of it. So, I think they understand what our team's going through and what the city is going through in the Gulf Coast. To me that's what it means. They understand what everybody has gone through.

Re: As the Saints coach, you have had a better record on the road than home. How do you explain that?

Well, if I could explain it, I would have fixed it. But, I don't know. We just play pretty good on the road. If we had the same record at home, we'd be a hell of a football team. But, I don't know. That's why this game doesn't really bother us.

Re: Aside from the game being very emotional like you had mentioned, were you happy with how your team played now that you have looked at the tapes and analyzed it a little bit more?

Yeah, I think we can be better. There are a lot of things that we need to improve on. We made some mistakes that didn't hurt us and we had an opportunity in the third quarter. We had three big turnovers in the third quarter where we had a chance to get a big lead on Carolina, we didn't do that and got one score out of it. So, there are a lot of things we can do better, but I was happy with the effort. I was happy the way they played and I think we can do a lot better on the field.

Re: When you realize the damage in New Orleans, what did you say to the team that set the tone you obviously have now?

Well, I don't know. I talk to them everyday. Usually, I have a team meeting about once a week and we have met everyday just to discuss issues and talk about what was going on and what we're going to do, where we are going from here, and I mean things change.

Re: What was your message to the team? To keep working?

Well, I think the message to the team was we'll do whatever we can for the city. I think the best thing we can do as a football team to keep the Saints name out there, to keep the city and the Gulf Coast region out there, is win games. Unlike the Tsunami, it's two weeks on television and it goes away. The young lady, whatever happened to her in Aruba, she's on television for two weeks and it goes away. I think that this team – we can keep the Gulf Coast and New Orleans alive by just winning football games and raise a lot of money for the area.

Re: Did you lose your home? What happened to your home?

I had damage to the home, roof damage, windows blowing out, the fence blowing down, and the garage door blew away. But you know what? None of that is personal property. To this team, to myself, to the players, it really doesn't mean anything as long as their

family, their lives, their loved ones are all in tact. I think that for the most part a lot of guys lost a lot of homes. People in our business department lost three to four homes. Their mother or father lost homes. But I think the most important thing is that everybody is alive and well.

Re: Have you been back to the area at all yet?

I have not been back to it. Who knows when I'll go back?

Re: Did you have any family deaths within your organization?

No. We did not. We just had a lot of property damage. We had one of our people who works in the IT Department lost four homes between him, his sister, his mother, and his brother, they lost four homes.

Re: And where does he work?

He's in the IT Department.

Re: I'm Sorry?

I.T. (Information Technology)

Re: Is there one story that you can relate to us about all the many, many tragic stories that you have heard and seen yourself over the last couple of weeks that really in your mind typifies the whole situation?

I tell you what, there are so many things that have happened in the last two weeks. There's just not one story. It's amazing the things that have gone on throughout the city and the region in talking to people about what they have lost, the damage, and the death, it's just unbelievable. It's something that hopefully no one ever-ever in this country has to go through again.

Re: We spoke to Joe Horn right before we got you and last time you played the Giants, it was the whole cell phone thing and nationally right or wrong, people got a certain impression of him. But through this whole thing, they kind of got a different impression of him. Has he matured over the last couple of years or was this the guy he always was?

I'll tell you about Joe. Joe has – if you don't know Joe Horn, you would think that Joe Horn is a little to himself, a little cocky. Joe Horn is just the opposite. Joe Horn is a family man. He's got six kids. He loves his family. He doesn't go out at night time. He lives in a normal home. Everything he does is to the betterment of his family. So, you can't say enough about Joe Horn. I think Joe Horn has grown up in the last couple of years and he's become a leader of this football team. People respect what he's done and I think Joe has made strides on and off the field.

Re: Is there part of you that believes there had to be a better solution that to play this game at Giants Stadium on Monday night?

From a coach's perspective, I would say yes because you like to play at home or somewhere where you are practicing, or a neutral site where the away team doesn't have the advantage. But, I understand what the NFL was trying to do to raise money for the relief fund and I think that probably the best city to do that in is New York City. So, I understand what the NFL was trying to do, but also the coach of a team is trying to win games, too.