



Gussie Glapion:

The Inspirational Story of a Katrina Survivor

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Who is Gussie?

Gussie was just like any other ordinary 51-year-old woman living in the city of New Orleans. She was an administrative assistant, had an 11-year-old Pomeranian companion named Osa, and lived in a double shotgun that she was raised in ever since she was a little girl. Gussie's life was relatively simple, and she thought it would stay that way forever. But that all changed on the fateful day of August 29, 2005 when Hurricane Katrina stroke.



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The Storm Hits



Gussie was among the many other residents of New Orleans who ignored Mayor Ray Nagin's pleas to evacuate the city before Hurricane Katrina struck. She was confident that her house would be untouched, as her house had never had any storm damage before, and after the storm was over, Gussie was sure that she had been right. The only damage to her property were a few shingles that had been ripped off, and a few trees that had fallen next to it. Then the flood waters rose. Within a matter of minutes, several tons of water breached Gussie's home and flooded the entire first floor. Gussie was in a state of shock. What was she going to do?

Surviving the Storm

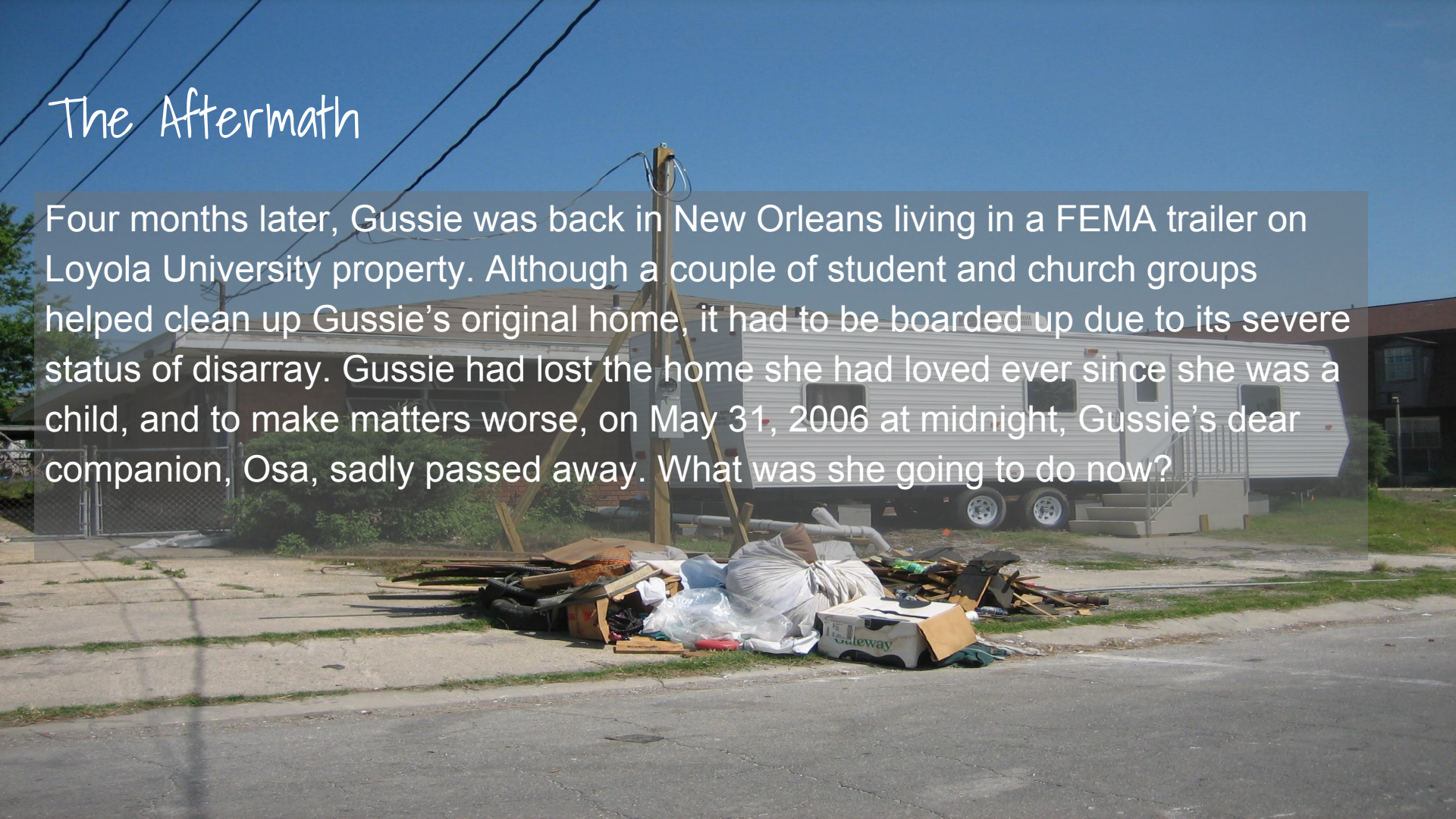
Here is some firsthand video of the horrors Gussie experienced here-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zXZ-R0mcN0>

The only thing that was still intact in Gussie's home was a phone line, which Gussie used to give her daughter, Quinna, regular updates. Gussie remained positive, but by Wednesday, Quinna urged her to go to the Convention Center of New Orleans to find help. Thinking that her salvation would be found, Gussie and Osa, her dog, made the long journey to the center only to find the complete chaos that had formed. With over 20,000 people there, water and food were scarce, and sanitation was out of the question. Settling down in a spot outside the center, Gussie was fearful that her and her dog would die of dehydration or starvation. In a phone call to Quinna, Gussie exclaimed that Osa was dying. Several days later on Friday, help finally came. Gussie's perseverance had paid off. A bus transported her to Louis Armstrong International Airport where she boarded a flight to Austin to reunite with her daughter. It was over, for now.

The Aftermath

Four months later, Gussie was back in New Orleans living in a FEMA trailer on Loyola University property. Although a couple of student and church groups helped clean up Gussie's original home, it had to be boarded up due to its severe status of disarray. Gussie had lost the home she had loved ever since she was a child, and to make matters worse, on May 31, 2006 at midnight, Gussie's dear companion, Osa, sadly passed away. What was she going to do now?



Recovery and Current Situation

Tired of living in a cramped FEMA trailer, Gussie looked for a rental property to move into. Luckily, she found a place that was 800 square feet just across the river in Jefferson Parish. She also applied for a furniture voucher that gave her a fully furnished apartment which she did not have to pay for. Things were looking up, but Gussie still wanted to go home. Nine years later, there has been no progress. Gussie's home has been torn down, and Gussie has had no luck in the home grant program that she has been submitting applications for. Tax issues have been complicating the progress among other issues, but Gussie still remains hopeful. Seeing the reconstruction of both the Convention Center and Superdome, Gussie believes that her time of peace will come.