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*United States Department of Justice
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Immediate Release
November 9, 2005

FOUR INDICTED WITH FEMA FRAUD IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA - Jim Letten, United States Attorney of the Eastern District of Louisiana, Charles Haas, Special Agent in Charge of the Office of Investigator General, United States Department of Homeland Security, and Jim Bernazzani, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation announce that on Friday, November 4, 2005, a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Houma, Louisiana returned four indictments under seal against four defendants for filing false claims filed with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for emergency disaster relief after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which resulted in each defendant receiving \$2,000.00 in taxpayer-funded monies to which they were not entitled. Two of these defendants are presently wanted and sought by special agents of the FBI pursuant to warrants of

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their arrest. One defendant has received a summons and one defendant is presently in custody on an unrelated charge.

Indicted were **LYNDA SMITH-GREEN**, age 57, of Bogalusa, Louisiana, **STEVIE LAWSON**, age 42, of Houma, **JERMAINE O. WHITE**, age 20, of Houma, and **MORRIS L. SINGLETON**, age 22, of Houma, were charged with violating Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001 for material false statements to the United States. The indictments allege that each of these defendants used a false address in order to secure FEMA emergency monies to which they would otherwise not be entitled.

According to the indictment, **SMITH-GREEN** executed an application with FEMA for government funds using an address of 1125 Seal Street when in truth and in fact, she did not live there until after Hurricane Katrina. She also had in her possession a forged rental receipt for the Seal Street address.

Defendants, **STEVIE LAWSON**, **MORRIS SINGLETON** and **JERMAINE WHITE** are charged in the indictments with having telephonically filed applications for government funds claiming they were displaced from stated addresses in the Houma area, despite the fact that the properties in question were owned by other individuals, and had been vacant for more than one year.

Each defendant faces up to five (5) years in federal custody and a \$50,000 fine if convicted.

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U. S. Attorney Jim Letten said:

“These indictments are a strong signal of the U. S. Department of Justice’s absolute commitment to investigate and prosecute any and all fraudulent attempts - no matter how large or small - to steal by fraud monies destined to help the recovery of those citizens who were legitimately displaced and harmed by Hurricane Katrina. No abuse, fraud, theft or *attempt* to abuse the system will be tolerated. Indeed, the U. S. Department of Justice and our partners throughout federal law enforcement, will dedicate and employ all assets necessary to punish and deter anyone from corruptly taking advantage of relief efforts.”

Jim Bernazzani, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, added:

“The FBI is committed to aggressively investigate all allegations of hurricane relief fraud. To those of you who may engage in this criminal activity, you may get your money up front, but the FBI will come after you, no matter where you are and no matter how long it takes.”

Special Agent in Charge Bernazzani also reminded the public that if they have any information indicating fraudulent activity relating to hurricane relief, the public can call a toll free number, 1-800-CALL FBI (1-800-225-5324) 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

U. S. Attorney Letten reiterated that a grand jury indictment is merely a method of charging a defendant and that the defendant’s guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

These investigations were handled by Special Agents of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and Federal Bureau of Investigation. These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U. S. Attorneys Carter K. D. Guice, Jr., Peter M. Thomson and Dorothy M. Taylor, who will continue conducting these important investigations.