



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi**

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FIVE INDIVIDUALS INDICTED ON CONSPIRACY TO DEFRAUD THE GOVERNMENT

Jackson, Miss. - Five individuals were arraigned in federal court this week and charged with conspiracy to defraud the government, U.S. Attorney John Dowdy announced today. The individuals charged in the criminal indictment filed on July 6, 2011 are:

Aubrey Brent Sturdivant, 26, of Waynesboro, MS;
Shane Sturdivant, 29, of Waynesboro, MS;
Rita Giles, 51, of Chicago, IL;
Laura Walley, 26, of Pamplico, SC;
Valerie Shortridge, 29, of Waynesboro, MS

The indictment alleges that from November 2005 through December 2006, the defendants conspired to defraud the United States and commit offenses against the United States involving Hurricane Katrina debris removal in Wayne County, Mississippi.

These arrests are the result of a lengthy investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Mississippi State Auditors Office.

The defendants have been arraigned in federal court and are set for trial on September 6, 2011, before U.S. District Judge Daniel P. Jordan. If convicted, they each face a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000.00 fine.

Dowdy noted that, as in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.

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