



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05/25/06

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THOMAS SENTENCED ON FEMA FRAUD CHARGES

ATLANTA, GA - DWIGHT MICHAEL THOMAS, 22, of Maurer, LA, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell on charges of defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) out of assistance funds that were designated for Hurricane Katrina victims.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the case, "This defendant enriched himself by exploiting an opportunity arising from one of the worst natural disasters in American history. As this year's hurricane season approaches, let this case be a warning to unscrupulous people who might consider filing false claims for disaster relief: we will prosecute you to the full extent of the law."

THOMAS was sentenced to five years of probation, fined \$3,000, and was ordered to pay full restitution to FEMA. THOMAS pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud on March 15, 2006.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court:

On September 12, 2005, THOMAS filed an application with FEMA for emergency assistance, claiming that he was a victim of Hurricane Katrina. On September 26, 2005, THOMAS also filed for rental assistance. In his application, THOMAS falsely represented that he was residing in Louisiana at the time when Hurricane Katrina made landfall. Relying on THOMAS's misrepresentations, FEMA mailed two checks totaling \$4,358 to the defendant. THOMAS cashed the checks and spent the money. Investigation later revealed that THOMAS had been living in Doraville, Georgia, with his girlfriend's family for at least five months prior to Hurricane Katrina making landfall, and that he was not a victim of Hurricane Katrina at all.

On May 3, 2006, KATRILLUS WHITE, 20, who is the sister of THOMAS's girlfriend, entered a plea of guilty to fraudulently obtaining FEMA funds that were designated for Hurricane Katrina victims. Her sentencing is scheduled for July 11, 2006, before Judge Pannell.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the United States Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorney BJay Pak prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or William L. McKinnon, Chief, Economic Crime and Cybercrime, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/ga.