



Department of Justice

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SALLY QUILLIAN YATES
Northern District of Georgia

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

Candice Thompson Stole Identities of Good Samaritans Who Provided Temporary Housing; Also Claimed to Be from Biloxi While She Was in Marietta

ATLANTA, GA - CANDICE PAIGE THOMPSON, 38, of Alpharetta, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell, Jr. to federal prison on charges of credit card fraud and aggravated identity theft.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the case, "Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States. In response, people from all over the country opened their homes, volunteered their time, and donated money to assist affected residents from the Gulf Coast. This defendant stole the identities of the Good Samaritans who invited her into their homes and racked up thousands of dollars in credit card charges. Today's sentencing ensures that her next home will be federal prison."

"This defendant took advantage of the generosity of the American people, using the U.S. mail to commit her fraud. In doing so, she underestimated Postal Inspectors' commitment to protecting the American public and the nation's mail system. Today's sentence will give the defendant plenty of time to think about those she victimized," said Martin D. Phanco, U.S. Postal Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division.

THOMPSON was sentenced to 3 years, 3 months in prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$68,251.32 in restitution. THOMPSON pleaded guilty to the charges on July 27, 2010.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: In September 2005, THOMPSON filed a claim for Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") assistance, falsely claiming to be a resident of Biloxi, Mississippi, rendered homeless by Hurricane Katrina. While the claim was pending, FEMA referred THOMPSON to the American Red Cross and other Metro-Atlanta charities for other types of assistance. THOMPSON applied for and received housing assistance through a local charity. She was then put in contact with the victims, who had registered with the charity to

provide housing to those displaced by Hurricane Katrina. While living in the victims' residences, THOMPSON stole their identities, opened several credit card accounts, and accrued tens of thousands of dollars of charges.

In September 2005, the Justice Department created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

This case was investigated by Inspectors of the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Assistant United States Attorney Jamila M. Hall prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, 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.justice.gov/usao/gan.