



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi

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FOURTEEN INMATES INDICTED FOR HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

Jackson, Mississippi - United States Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today that fourteen current and former inmates from the Mississippi Department of Corrections were indicted by a federal grand jury for FEMA fraud following Hurricane Katrina. Each of these individuals were serving time in prison at the time of Hurricane Katrina. The majority of those indicted today had been incarcerated for at least a year prior to Hurricane Katrina's landfall.

The following individuals were indicted:

Lance A. Tovsland, of Saucier, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, and conversion of government funds. Tovsland submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Gulfport which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of twenty years in prison and a \$750,000 fine.

Phyllis R. Miller, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Miller submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Gulfport which was not her primary residence. If convicted, she faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Merlin W. Winters, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Winters submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Gulfport which was not his primary residence. Winters also submitted a false application to the Small Business Administration for a Disaster Home Loan. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 45 years in prison and a \$1,250,000 fine.

Brian A. Carr, of Biloxi, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Carr submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Biloxi which was not his primary residence. Carr also submitted a false application to the Small Business Administration for a Disaster Home Loan. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 45 years in prison and a \$1,250,000 fine.

Jacob W. Henley, of Biloxi, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion

of government funds, and mail fraud. Henley submitted a false claim and received funds for disaster assistance on a property in Biloxi which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Kevin Sherrod, of Moss Point, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Sherrod submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Pascagoula which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Charles Necaise, of Saucier, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Necaise submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Saucier which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Charles Jones, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Jones submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Biloxi which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

James Arnold, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Arnold submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Gulfport which was not his primary residence. Arnold also submitted false applications to the Small Business Administration for a Disaster Home Loan and for a Disaster Business Loan. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 50 years in prison and a \$1,500,000 fine.

Joseph Strickland, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Strickland submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Hattiesburg which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Douglas Horton a/k/a Douglas Harton, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Horton submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Hattiesburg which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Alex Woods, of Biloxi, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. Woods submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Biloxi which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Curtis Cooper, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Gulfport which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Anthony Kozlowski, Jr. of Gautier, Mississippi, is charged with making a false claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, making a false statement to FEMA, conversion of government funds, and mail fraud. submitted a false claim and received funds from FEMA for disaster assistance on a property in Hattiesburg which was not his primary residence. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

These indictments are the result of a joint federal/state investigative effort. Agencies participating included the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Office of Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U. S. Postal Inspection Service, Small Business Administration - Office of Inspector General, Mississippi Department of Human Services, and the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

These charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

In September, 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national 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 - chaired by Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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