



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Dunn Lampton
Southern District of Mississippi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2007
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CONTACT: SHEILA WILBANKS
PHONE: (601) 965-4480
FAX: (601) 965-4409

TWO MISSISSIPPIANS PLEAD GUILTY TO KATRINA FRAUD

JACKSON, Miss. – Earnestine Lewis and Patrick Coleman, both of Canton, Miss., pled guilty in federal court to submitting false claims to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today.

Lewis caused \$2,358.00 to be mailed from FEMA by providing a false address in Biloxi, Mississippi. She was sentenced to three years probation with a special condition of 40 hours of community service, and ordered to pay restitution to FEMA in the amount of \$2,358.00.

Coleman caused \$2,000.00 to be mailed from FEMA by providing a false address in Biloxi, Mississippi. He was sentenced to three years probation with a special condition of 40 hours of community service, and ordered to pay restitution to FEMA in the amount of \$2,000.00.

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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