



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David R. Dugas
Middle District of Louisiana

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CONTACT: DAVID R. DUGAS
(225) 389-0443
FAX: (225) 389-0561

THREE MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today that three more Louisiana residents have been indicted on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program.

TYLISHA D. BARNHILL, age 23, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a three-count indictment with mail fraud (Count One), illegal theft/conversion of government property (Count Two), and making a false writing/document (Count Three). The indictment alleges that BARNHILL caused a false and fraudulent application to be filed for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) benefits in which she falsely claimed to have been living in New Orleans at the time of Hurricane Katrina. When FEMA contacted BARNHILL regarding her application, BARNHILL created and submitted fraudulent documents to FEMA in an effort to conceal her fraud. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on Count One, BARNHILL faces a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. If convicted on Count Two, BARNHILL faces a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. If convicted on Count Three, BARNHILL faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

NATASHA N. LONDON, age 32, and JESSICA D. CAVALIER, age 27, both of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were each charged in two-count indictments with mail fraud and with making a false claim for disaster assistance benefits from FEMA. The indictments allege that both LONDON and CAVALIER submitted false and fraudulent applications for FEMA benefits in which they falsely claimed to have been living in New Orleans at the time of Hurricane Katrina and falsely claiming that Hurricane Katrina caused damage to their homes and personal property. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted on the mail fraud count, LONDON and CAVALIER each face a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. If convicted of making a false claim, LONDON and CAVALIER each face a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Today's indictments bring the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred fifty-five.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales 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 – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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