



# NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Texas

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TWO INDICTED FOR HURRICANE FRAUD**

(Beaumont, TX) Two individuals were indicted in the Eastern District of Texas on charges of filing false claims for Hurricane relief funds with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Separate indictments were returned today against 35-year-old **SHERRI HARRIS** of Lake Charles, LA and 44-year-old **ANTHONY JOHNSON** of Beaumont. Today, January 18, 2006, a Beaumont grand jury indicted Sherri Harris, 35, of Lake Charles, Louisiana, and Anthony Johnson, 44, of Beaumont, Texas.

According to information contained in the indictment, Harris allegedly submitted a claim with FEMA on October 3, 2005, for Hurricane Rita disaster relief benefits in which she falsely claimed that her previous residence in Dayton, Texas, was damaged by flooding during the hurricane.

In a separate indictment, Johnson is accused of submitting a claim on October 1, 2005, with FEMA for Hurricane Rita disaster relief benefits in which he falsely claimed that his residence and personal property in Beaumont, Texas, were damaged by looting and flooding Hurricane Rita. In fact, Johnson is a resident of a halfway house which did not sustain any

significant damage.

Both were charged with filing a false claim and making false statements.

These cases are part of an initiative by the Department of Justice Hurricane Fraud Task Force, established by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft and insurance and benefits fraud.

It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

If convicted, the defendants each face up to five years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 for each charge.

The case against Harris was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG). The case against Johnson was investigated by the DHS OIG with the assistance of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Assistant United States Attorney David H. Henderson is prosecuting both cases.

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