



# UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

*United States Attorney Donald W. Washington  
Western District of Louisiana*

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United States Courthouse • 300 Fannin Street, Suite 3201 • Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3068 • (318) 676-3600  
United States Courthouse • 800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-7206 • (337) 262-6618

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Contact: Donald W. Washington (337-262-6618)  
William J. Flanagan (318-676-3600)

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## FEMA FRAUD INDICTMENT RESULTS IN GUILTY PLEA

*New Iberia woman fraudulently applies for over \$100,000  
in disaster relief funds*

**Lafayette, Louisiana** . . . A New Iberia, Louisiana woman fraudulently applied for disaster relief from three government agencies after Hurricane Rita and has pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. **BARBARA ROBICHEAUX**, age 56, entered her plea before U.S. District Judge Tucker L. Melançon in Lafayette, Louisiana.

A Bill of Information was filed in October of this year charging ROBICHEAUX with three counts of making false claims to a federal agency. Following Hurricane Rita, ROBICHEAUX applied for federal disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) claiming that her primary residence in Delcambre, Louisiana had been damaged. After an investigation, agents learned that ROBICHEAUX did in fact own property in Delcambre, but had not lived there since 2002. ROBICHEAUX received \$121,000 from SBA, \$8,211 from FEMA, and \$798 from USDA, for a total loss of \$130,009.

ROBICHEAUX faces a sentence of up to five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on each count. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

In September 2005, the Attorney General of the United States 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 Inspector's Service, the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, and others. This individual brings the total to 38 defendants who have been convicted in the Western District of Louisiana with violations related to FEMA relief funds.

This case was investigated by the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kelly P. Uebinger.

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