



Department of Justice

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4 MORE PEOPLE PLEAD GUILTY TO KATRINA FRAUD

JACKSON, Miss. – Four individuals have entered guilty pleas in U. S. District Court for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) fraud in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, announced U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton, of the Southern District of Mississippi.

Marion Griffin, of Morton, Miss, pleaded guilty to theft and conversion of Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance funds. Griffin fraudulently received and spent \$2,000 in FEMA disaster assistance funds which were obtained after Griffin claimed a false address in Moss Point. Griffin lived in Scott County, and not at the address claimed at the time Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Glenda Spangler, of Morton, Miss, pleaded guilty to making a false and fraudulent claim to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance by providing a false address in Pascagoula, and claiming hurricane damage at that address. Spangler lived in Scott County, and not at the address claimed at the time Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Charles Lyles, of Brookhaven, Miss, pleaded guilty to a mail fraud scheme which resulted in Lyles fraudulently obtaining FEMA hurricane relief benefits and hotel accommodations paid for by FEMA. Lyles admitted that he lied about his primary residence in his FEMA application by using an address in Brookhaven.

Karynette Arnold, of Jackson, Miss, pleaded guilty to making a false statement to FEMA by using a fictitious address in Jackson as her primary residence and claiming damage to that residence. The address claimed by Arnold was an abandoned home.

All defendants are scheduled to be sentenced before U.S. District Judge Tom S. Lee on Dec. 1, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

The maximum sentence for the Spangler and Arnold is five years and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum sentence for Griffin is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum sentence for Lyles is 20 years and a \$250,000 fine.

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.

U. S. Attorney Lampton stressed that these charges represent accusations only and all defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence.

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