



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2006  
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## **FOUR OKLAHOMA RESIDENTS CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO FRAUDULENTLY OBTAIN FEMA HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF FUNDS**

OKLAHOMA CITY – A federal grand jury in Oklahoma has indicted four residents for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft of public funds related to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hurricane Katrina disaster relief funds announced U.S. Attorney John C. Richter of the Western District of Oklahoma. Those indicted include Kimiesha K. Hill, 24; Lanieceia L. Hooper, 40; Doris J. McDaniels, 61; and Thomas Gene Perry, 44; all of Lawton, Okla.

According to the indictment, from September to October of 2005, the defendants, who had suffered no damage from Hurricane Katrina, conspired between themselves and others to submit false and fraudulent on-line applications for Hurricane Katrina relief funds to be sent through the internet from Lawton, Okla., to FEMA's national registration center for disaster assistance located in Denton, Texas. The indictment alleges that based on the false and fraudulent applications, FEMA either electronically wire-transferred \$2,000 to the conspirators' bank accounts or mailed \$2,000 disaster relief checks to the defendants who either cashed them or deposited them into bank accounts.

According to the indictment, Hill and Hooper solicited and recruited additional conspirators to participate in the fraudulent scheme and provide a portion of the proceeds to previously convicted individuals, Shelia Ann Perry and Jacqueline Marie Sutton, in exchange for the opportunity to participate in the scheme. Two weeks ago, Perry was sentenced to serve 24 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$18,000 after pleading guilty to theft of Hurricane Katrina funds. In May, Sutton was sentenced to five years probation and ordered to pay \$2000 in restitution after pleading guilty to filing a false claim for FEMA funds.

If convicted, Hill, Hooper, McDaniels and Perry each face up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force 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 of United States Attorneys, and others.

This case is prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Robinson.

The public is reminded that the indictment is merely an accusation and that the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Reference is made to the indictment for further information.

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