



Department of Justice

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DALLAS MAN ARRESTED ON FEMA FRAUD CHARGES

DALLAS - A Dallas man who claimed to be a hurricane Katrina victim was arrested on charges outlined in a three-count indictment returned in October 2006 by a federal grand jury in Dallas, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper of the Northern District of Texas. Barry Ward, age 42, of Dallas, was arrested yesterday, without incident, by officers with the Irving, Texas, Police Department. The indictment charges Ward with one count of filing false claims against an agency of the U.S., one count of mail fraud and one count of wire fraud. Ward appeared before a U.S. Magistrate Judge today who ordered him detained, pending a detention hearing set for next week.

The indictment alleges that in September 2005, Barry Ward fraudulently applied for individual financial assistance from FEMA under the Disaster Housing Program and the Individual Assistance programs, stating that his primary home in New Orleans had suffered damage and his personal property was also damaged as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Ward made further fraudulent requests for rental assistance from FEMA. Ward fraudulently obtained approximately \$17,655 from FEMA in disaster relief funds.

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 members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, among others.

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. However, if convicted on all charges, defendant Barry Ward faces a maximum statutory sentence of 45 years in prison and a \$750,000 fine.

U.S. Attorney Roper commended the investigative efforts of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña.

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