



Department of Justice

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TWO SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR COMMITTING HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA— Ronald Irby, age 36, of Enterprise, Alabama, and Terrance Kirksey, age 31, of Prattville, Alabama, were sentenced to prison terms in U.S. District Court in Montgomery, Alabama, after pleading guilty to conspiring to file false Hurricane Katrina disaster relief claims, Leura G. Canary, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, announced today.

Irby pled guilty on December 5, 2007, to conspiring to defraud the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) by filing false claims for disaster relief funds after Hurricane Katrina. Although he was not a resident of New Orleans and had not suffered any losses due to Hurricane Katrina, Irby obtained a New Orleans address and used it to file a claim with FEMA in which he said that his home had been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Irby received over \$16,000.00 in relief funds to which he was not entitled. After pleading guilty, Irby was sentenced on February 21, 2008, to spend 21 months in federal prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. Irby was also ordered to make full restitution to FEMA of the funds he fraudulently obtained.

In a separate case, Kirksey also pled guilty on November 16, 2007, to conspiring to defraud FEMA by obtaining Hurricane Katrina disaster relief funds. Kirksey participated in a scheme with two others to file false Hurricane Katrina claims with FEMA. Kirksey’s application

claimed he lived in Biloxi, Mississippi, and that his home had been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. However, Kirksey lived in Montgomery, Alabama, at the time of Hurricane Katrina and did not suffer any losses. Kirksey and his co-conspirators fraudulently obtained over \$6,000.00 from FEMA, with Kirksey receiving \$2,000.00 of that amount. On February 22, 2008, Kirksey was sentenced to 12 months and 1 day in federal prison and 3 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay full restitution.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Alabama is a member of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by the Department of Justice in September 2005 to deter, detect, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes. The Task Force is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, and United States Attorneys' Offices from the Gulf Coast region and nationwide. According to United States Attorney Leura G. Canary, "This office is dedicated to prosecuting those who saw Hurricane Katrina as an opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of others. Offenders who filed fraudulent claims took money away from the real victims of Hurricane Katrina who were in desperate need. Sending these two offenders to prison shows the severity of their crime."

Irby's case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the assistance of the Middle District's Hurricane Katrina Task Force. Kirksey's case was investigated by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, with the assistance of the Middle District's Hurricane Katrina Task Force. The Middle District's Task Force consists of members from the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, and the United States Secret Service.

These cases were prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Shepherd.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721.