



# NEWS RELEASE

**Matthew D. Orwig**  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Texas

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

DATE: May 4, 2006

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## **HOTEL MANAGER INDICTED FOR HURRICANE RELATED FRAUD**

(Texarkana, TX) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced that a 64-year-old Texarkana hotel manager has been indicted this week for hurricane related fraud in the Eastern District of Texas. **DENA FUSELIER**, of Atlanta, Texas, has been charged with five counts of wire fraud in connection with her job as the general manager of the Ramada Inn in Texarkana, Texas.

U.S. Attorney Orwig said he remained diligent in the pursuit of any form of hurricane fraud, "Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were national tragedies that devastated the Gulf Coast. It is disappointing that some would try to defraud those programs put in place to help those who fled the storms."

According to the indictment, during September and October, 2005, Fuselier allegedly instructed employees of the Ramada Inn to check each hurricane evacuee into the hotel for a 14-day period. Fuselier further instructed the hotel's employees that should an evacuee check-out of the hotel prior to the 14-day period, the evacuee should be maintained on the hotel's computer system as if they were still a guest of the hotel. Fuselier instructed hotel employees to transfer the names of evacuees who had checked-out from the original room they were assigned to an "off market" room. Off market rooms are rooms at the Ramada Inn which are under renovation or used for storage and not available for hotel guests. False billing statements were then sent to

Corporate Lodging Consultants, Inc, the contracting agent for the American National Red Cross responsible for reimbursing hotels for lodging costs of hurricane evacuees. As a result, the Red Cross was defrauded of \$19,980.00 for reimbursements for hotel rooms not occupied by hurricane evacuees.

Fuselier is scheduled for an initial appearance in federal court in Texarkana on May 31, 2006. If convicted, Fuselier faces up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

These cases are part of an initiative by the Department of Justice Hurricane Fraud Task Force, established by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft and insurance and benefits fraud.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Barry Bryant.

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