



Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RIVERVIEW PLAZA
63 S. ROYAL ST., SUITE 600
MOBILE, AL 36602
CONTACT: CHARLIE McNICHOL
PH: (251) 441-5845
FX: (251) 441-6526

**DEFENDANT FILED FRAUDULENT HURRICANE KATRINA
CLAIM—ALTHOUGH HE RODE STORM OUT IN JAIL**

The first Hurricane Katrina fraud case to be indicted in the Southern District of Alabama charges a homeless man who was in jail when the storm made landfall. U.S. Attorney Deborah J. Rhodes announced that on April 27, 2006 a federal grand jury in Mobile charged Arthur Lee Bonner with making false claims to the United States and mail fraud in connection with his fraudulent application for FEMA assistance following Hurricane Katrina. “While this is the first indictment from our district, it probably will not be the last. We are committed to prosecuting everyone who is found to be receiving money that they are not entitled to in the wake of such a horrific disaster”, said Ms. Rhodes.

On September 19, 2005 Mr. Bonner called FEMA requesting assistance following Hurricane Katrina, claiming that he was homeless at the time, but that his home at 803 Broad Street in Mobile, Alabama had suffered damage in the hurricane. FEMA mailed a check in the amount of \$2000.00 to Bonner at 803 Broad Street. Bonner subsequently cashed the check. Responding to an unrelated complaint about a FEMA claim made using Bonner’s Social Security number, agents from the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General investigated Bonner’s claim. The investigation determined that he was in the Okaloosa County, Florida jail during Hurricane Katrina, and that he did not live at 803 Broad Street, neither during the storm or afterward.

Other investigations of this nature continue and more indictments are expected. A number of the investigations have originated with information provided to a special hotline dedicated to receiving hurricane fraud information. Anyone who believes they may have information about fraudulent activity is encouraged to report it immediately through the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General’s Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline at 1-800-720-5721.

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