



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2006
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TWO MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON FEDERAL FEMA FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that a federal grand jury returned indictments on March 30, 2006, against two more Louisiana residents on federal FEMA fraud charges.

TERRY WATSON, age 40, of Zachary, Louisiana, and LYDIA JONES, age 23, of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, were each charged in two-count indictments with making false and fraudulent claims for disaster assistance benefits and with making false and fraudulent statements to FEMA. The charges resulted from investigations conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. If convicted, WATSON and JONES face a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine per count.

These individuals bring the total number of defendants who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to FEMA relief funds to forty-seven.

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 United States Attorneys, among others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443.

NOTE: An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until and unless she is proven guilty at trial.

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