



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of Louisiana

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GUILTY PLEA TO THEFT FROM FEMA AND CREDIT UNION

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA - Jim Letten, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, and FBI Special Agent in Charge James Bernazzani, Jr. announced today that Michelle Taylor of New Orleans, age 26, pled guilty to stealing money from ASI Federal Credit Union and also to defrauding FEMA. Both crimes occurred during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Ms. Taylor plead guilty before U.S. District Judge Mary Ann Vial Lemmon to a violation of 18 U.S.C. 2113(b) for Bank Larceny, and also to 18 U.S.C. 1001(a)(2) for making false statements to a government agency. Ms. Taylor was a member of ASI Federal Credit Union at the time of Hurricane Katrina. Due to a computer malfunction caused by Katrina, ASI account holders were able to withdraw unlimited amounts of cash through ATM transactions and to make unlimited purchases with their ASI debit cards. Ms. Taylor overdrafted her ASI account by \$7,487.57. Ms Taylor also applied for FEMA benefits even though she had moved to Atlanta one year prior to Katrina.

The maximum sentence she could receive for Bank Larceny is ten years imprisonment, and/or a fine of \$250,000 or the greater of twice the gross gain to the defendant or twice the gross loss to any person under Title 18, United States Code, Section 3571. The maximum sentence she could receive for FEMA fraud is five years imprisonment, and/or a fine of \$250,000 or the greater of twice the gross gain to the defendant or twice the gross loss to any person under Title 18, United States Code, Section 3571. Sentencing for Ms. Taylor is set for February 14, 2007.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the FBI assigned to the Katrina Fraud Task Force. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jeff Mitchell, and former Assistant United States Attorney William Gibbens.

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