



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Alabama

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MONTGOMERY MAN ARRESTED ON HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA—United States Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today that Jacob Warner, age 25, of Montgomery, Alabama, was arrested and—in an order issued this morning—temporarily detained in relation to a federal indictment, which alleges that Warner fraudulently obtained disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

The indictment, returned by a Montgomery, Alabama, Grand Jury on November 16, 2006, alleges Warner submitted a variety of applications for benefits to FEMA claiming that he had suffered damage to various properties he rented or owned as his primary residence in either Harvey or Gretna, Louisiana. In fact, Warner did not reside in Louisiana and did not suffer the losses claimed.

As a result of the false claims, Warner received four checks totalling \$8,358. Warner has been charged with four counts of theft of government property, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641. If convicted of all four counts, the statutory maximum penalty is forty years imprisonment and fines.

Warner was in state custody on unrelated criminal charge and appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan Walker on Tuesday afternoon. In an order issued this morning, Judge Walker ordered that Warner be temporarily detained until at least Friday, December 1, 2006, while the U.S. Probation Office attempts to determine whether there are conditions or any combination of conditions that could ensure his appearance at trial. Trial has been set for April 23, 2007, before the Honorable W. Keith Watkins, United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama.

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 Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales in September 2005 to deter, detect, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes. The Task Force, chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of DOJ's Criminal Division, 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.

This matter was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher A. Snyder. Thus far, the Middle District of Alabama has charged a total of sixteen Hurricane Katrina and Rita fraud-related cases involving eighteen different defendants.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

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