



PRESS RELEASE

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Leura Garrett Canary, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, announced that on January 20, 2006, a federal grand jury returned separate indictments against the following Montgomery residents:

Grace Nichole Pettway, age 31

Shalanda Long, age 32

Shulonda Johnson, age 22.

All three individuals are charged with fraudulently obtaining disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The indictment alleges that all three defendants submitted applications for benefits to FEMA claiming that they had suffered damage to property they rented as their primary residence in Louisiana. In fact, the defendants lived in Montgomery, not Louisiana, and did not suffer the losses claimed. As a result of the false claims Johnson and Pettway each received a benefit check for \$2,000. Long received two checks,

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each for \$2,000.

Johnson and Pettway are each charged with one count of theft of government property, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641. Long has been charged with two counts of theft of government property, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 641. Each count carries a statutory maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment.

All of the defendants surrendered to the U. S. Marshal today and initial appearances were held this afternoon, at which point they were released on bail. Trial was set for April 24, 2006, for Long, June 26, 2006, for Pettway, and August 7, 2006, for Johnson.

The cases were investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, with assistance from the Montgomery Police Department. The cases will be prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher A. Snyder.

This is the second round of Katrina related fraud cases that have been indicted in this district. Previously in November, 2005, a grand jury in the Middle District indicted Natasha Risay Howard, Valarie Howard, Crystal Denise Phillips, and Angela Michelle Williams for fraudulently obtaining or attempting to obtain disaster assistance from FEMA. Those cases are currently being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew O. Schiff and Christopher A. Snyder.

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