



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WACO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO HURRICANE KATRINA FRAUD

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that, thirty-three year-old George Marrero faces up to five years in federal prison after pleading guilty to making a false and fictitious claim to a federal agency.

By pleading guilty, Marrero admitted that on September 15, 2005, he made a claim to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for Hurricane Katrina disaster relief benefits, knowing that the claim was false, fictitious and fraudulent. When he made the fraudulent claim, he did not live at the Louisiana address he listed on his disaster relief application and had suffered no property loss due to the hurricane at the time the claims for Hurricane Katrina disaster relief were made. He also falsely used a number, which he alleged to be his Social Security number, for the purpose of obtaining Hurricane Katrina related emergency assistance from the Red Cross, for which he was not eligible. Marrero entered his guilty plea on February 3, 2006.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 22, 2006. This case was investigated by the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Greg Gloff.

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 of the United States Attorneys, among others.

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