



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Texas

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COLLEGE STATION MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING FEMA OF HURRICANE KATRINA DISASTER FUNDS

HOUSTON, TX—United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg announced today that Royce Allen, 39, of College Station, Texas, has been convicted of filing a false claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Katrina Disaster Funds and mail fraud.

At a hearing held today before United States District Judge Melinda Harmon, Allen, pleaded guilty to both federal felony offenses. Judge Harmon scheduled Allen's sentencing for March 10, 2006. At sentencing, Mr. Allen faces a maximum punishment of five years imprisonment for the false claim conviction and twenty years imprisonment for the mail fraud conviction. Each conviction also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000. Allen, who has been in federal custody without bond since his arrest in October 2005, will remain in federal custody pending his sentencing.

Allen's conviction is the result of an investigation initiated by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS OIG) following receipt of information from the Texas A&M University Police. Allen was living at a center for Hurricane Katrina evacuees on the Texas A&M campus, when A&M Police executed an outstanding Illinois arrest warrant for him on September 27. While officers were executing the warrant, Allen informed them that he previously resided in Springfield, Illinois, left Illinois in June 2005 for Kansas City, and received a ride from Kansas City to College Station. Allen informed the officers that he had never resided in Louisiana.

After learning that Allen had never resided in Louisiana, A&M police contacted the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) concerning suspected Katrina fraud. DHS OIG determined that Allen applied online for Katrina disaster assistance on September 6, 2005. In that application, Allen claimed his primary residence was 201 Lewis, New Orleans, Louisiana, and that Hurricane Katrina left him with essential needs for food, shelter, and clothing.

Based on Allen's claim, the Department of Treasury mailed a \$2,000 expedited disaster assistance check and a subsequent \$2,358 check to Allen at the evacuee center on the Texas A&M campus, which he had listed as his mailing address in his FEMA application.

A review of United States Postal Service records and real property records revealed that 201 Lewis in New Orleans is a fictitious address. The New Orleans Police Department confirmed that 201 Lewis does not exist. After DHS OIG agents arrested Allen, Allen admitted his FEMA claim was false.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas is a member of the Department of Justice's Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, created by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales to deter, detect, and prosecute unscrupulous individuals who try to take advantage of the Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita disasters. Headed by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher, the Task Force is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement investigating agencies and the United States Attorney's Offices in the Gulf Coast region and nationwide. This matter was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregg Costa.

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