



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Richard B. Roper**  
**Northern District of Texas**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2006  
[WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/TXN](http://WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/TXN)

CONTACT: KATHY COLVIN  
PHONE: (214) 659-8707  
FAX: (214) 767-0978

## **RED CROSS VOLUNTEER AND HIS SISTER SENTENCED**

### **Pair Admitted Stealing and Using At Least 80 Red Cross Debit Cards Intended for Hurricane Evacuees**

DALLAS, TX—Brian Oneal Hines, who stole and used at least 80 Red Cross debit cards intended for hurricane evacuees, and his sister, Charmaine Denise Hines, who admitted fraudulently using several of these stolen debit cards, were sentenced yesterday in federal court in Dallas, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper.

The Honorable Jorge A. Solis, United States District Judge, sentenced Brian Oneal Hines, 21, to 30 months imprisonment and ordered him to pay \$202,984.12 in restitution. Charmaine Denise Hines, 32, was sentenced to a total of 41 months imprisonment (26 months in this case and an additional, consecutive 15 months in an un-related federal case) and ordered to pay \$23,240.00 in restitution. Each defendant pled guilty in January one count of an indictment charging them with the fraudulent use of an access devise.

U.S. Attorney Roper said, "I'm very pleased with the sentences Judge Solis imposed on these defendants today. I will continue to use the full weight of federal law enforcement to investigate and prosecute those who greedily take advantage of others' misfortunes for their own self-serving benefit."

Brian and Charmaine Hines each admitted to their role in the scheme. Brian Hines was both a paid Red Cross temporary worker and an unpaid Red Cross volunteer. He assisted the Red Cross by performing several duties, including evacuee interviews, distribution of client assistance cards, and data entry. Brian Hines was given access to Red Cross debit cards (client assistance cards) and was authorized to activate and load these debit cards with a pre-approved dollar limit.

Brian Hines admitted that he used his position of trust and stole 80 Red Cross debit cards which were intended to provide financial aid to evacuees. He then made several lists at different times which contained stolen debit card numbers and both actual and fictitious cardholder names. As part of his effort to cover up and further his scheme, he also used fictitious cardholder names when he activated stolen Red Cross debit cards. He then took these lists to a computer and made unauthorized activations of these stolen debit cards. On some stolen debit cards, Brian Hines reloaded values for the same stolen debit card after that card's value had been depleted. These unlawful and fraudulent activations allowed him, or anyone else, to then make unauthorized cash withdrawals or merchandise purchases of up to \$5000.00 per stolen debit card. Based on Brian Hines' admission that he stole 80 debit cards and re-loaded three debit cards and could have

fraudulently activated these stolen cards for up to \$5000.00 per card, Brian Hines could have stolen up to \$415,000.00 of Red Cross funds.

Brian Hines concealed many stolen debit cards as well as lists of stolen debit card account numbers and fictitious account holder names in his automobile and at his residence in Dallas. He repeatedly took these stolen and fraudulently activated debit cards to local banks in the Dallas area where he then used ATM machines to make cash withdrawals.

Brian Hines admitted that he used the stolen funds to purchase automobiles, jewelry and clothing either for himself, or family members and friends. He also admitted that he gave several family members and friends several stolen debit cards as well as cash obtained from these stolen cards. To one particular friend, the defendant gave a large amount of cash and purchased a used automobile.

Brian Hines and Charmaine Denise Hines agreed that Brian Hines gave approximately 20-25 stolen Red Cross debit cards to Charmaine Denise Hines, telling her they were stolen from the Red Cross. Both Brian and Charmaine Hines used the stolen Red Cross debit cards to obtain cash and purchase merchandise. After Charmaine Hines received these stolen debit cards, she fraudulently obtained at least \$15,000 by using several stolen Red Cross debit cards to make fraudulent withdrawals from ATM machines at several banks in the Dallas area. She used the funds to purchase clothing, shoes, and jewelry.

During the period from September 1, 2005 through sometime on or about December 15, 2005, both Brian and Charmaine Hines fraudulently used, and aided and abetted others in using, stolen Red Cross debit cards which resulted in substantial financial losses to the Red Cross. Although the investigation into the total loss amount is ongoing, the above scheme caused verified actual losses to the Red Cross of at least \$202,984.12.

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.

"The American Red Cross takes fraud seriously and we turn cases over to law enforcement to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," said Leigh Bradley, Senior Vice President Enterprise Risk, American Red Cross. "We would like to thank the U.S. Attorney in Dallas, especially Assistant U.S. Attorney David Jarvis, and the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Postal Inspection Service for their help in bringing these individuals to justice."

U.S. Attorney Roper also praised the investigative efforts of the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David Jarvis.

###