



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2007
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GULFPORT WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO AMERICAN RED CROSS FRAUD

JACKSON, Miss. – **SHIRANN EVERETT** of Gulfport, Mississippi, appeared Tuesday, June 26, 2007, in U.S. District Court in Gulfport and entered a plea of guilty to an information charging her with devising a scheme to defraud the American Red Cross using wire communications following Hurricane Katrina, U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton announced today.

Everett was charged with making 8 separate claims for American Red Cross assistance at various centers and shelter in Mississippi, Georgia and Florida. Everett used a debit card she received at a Tampa shelter to obtain cash at an ATM in Gulfport. She obtained \$12,749.00 in Red Cross disaster assistance.

In September, 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the national 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 for the Criminal Division, Alice S. Fisher, includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

Pursuant to the Justice Department initiative, a local Katrina Fraud Task Force, consisting of over 20 Federal and State law enforcement agencies, was formed in the Southern District of Mississippi to pursue and prosecute individuals who engage in fraud associated with the hurricanes.

If anyone has information concerning possible fraud being committed during the post-Katrina recovery effort, please call either the DHS-OIG Fraud Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or the FBI Fraud Hotline at 1-800-225-5324.

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