



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2008
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FOUR MORE INDICTED, TWO MORE PLEAD GUILTY IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, TO DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced that four more Louisiana residents were indicted and two more pled guilty today to fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program.

LAKRESHA SHANTELL PIERCE, age 25, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in a four-count indictment with wire fraud (Count One), access device fraud (Count Two), and illegal use of Social Security numbers (Counts Three and Four). The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) provided funding for a variety of disaster-related programs, including disaster unemployment assistance (DUA). The Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL) administered the DUA program for residents of the State of Louisiana. DUA provided financial assistance to individuals whose employment had been interrupted or lost as a direct result of a major disaster declared by the President of the United States. The LDOL also administered the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program as part of the Social Security Act of 1935 to provide benefits to persons out of work through no fault of their own. The indictment alleges that in or about November 2005, PIERCE filed two fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits – one for DUA payments and the other for UI payments – using the names of people whom she knew did not exist and fraudulent Social Security numbers. It is further alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds totaling \$7,764 to be transmitted from the LDOL into Chase debit card accounts set up by the LDOL for access by assistance recipients (in this case, PIERCE). If convicted on all counts, PIERCE faces a maximum sentence of forty years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both.

RAY LAWRENCE LUCAS, JR., age 28, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was charged in an eight-count indictment with mail fraud (Counts One and Two), wire fraud (Counts Three through Five), access device fraud (Count Six), and illegal use of Social Security numbers (Counts Seven and Eight). The indictment alleges that from on or about November 7, 2005, through on or about November 22, 2005, LUCAS filed three fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits – two for DUA payments and one for UI payments – using the names of people whom he knew did not exist and fraudulent Social Security numbers. It is further alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds totaling \$10,170 to be transmitted from the LDOL into Chase debit card accounts set up by the LDOL for access by assistance recipients (in this case, LUCAS). If convicted on all counts, LUCAS faces a maximum sentence of one hundred twenty years imprisonment, a \$2,000,000 fine, or both.

SHALITHIA LAKALE DUNN, age 23, of Jackson, Louisiana, was charged in a five-count indictment with mail fraud (Counts One and Two), wire fraud (Count Three), access device fraud (Count Four), and illegal use of Social Security numbers (Count Five). The indictment alleges that from on or about November 28, 2005, through on or about November 30, 2005, DUNN filed two fraudulent claims for unemployment benefits – one for DUA payments and one for UI payments – using the names of people whom he knew did not exist and fraudulent Social Security numbers. It is further alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds totaling \$8,234 to be transmitted from the LDOL into Chase debit card accounts set up by the LDOL for access by assistance recipients (in this case, DUNN). If convicted on all counts, DUNN faces a maximum sentence of seventy-five years imprisonment, a \$1,250,000 fine, or both.

TONYA FAYE JARRELL, age 30, of Baker, Louisiana, was charged in a six-count indictment with wire fraud (Counts One and Two), access device fraud (Count Three), and illegal use of Social Security numbers (Counts Four through Six). The indictment alleges that on or about November 16, 2005, JARRELL filed a fraudulent claim for DUA benefits using a fraudulent Social Security number and falsely claiming that she had been employed in New Orleans, but had lost her employment because of Hurricane Katrina. The indictment further alleges that on or about November 30, 2005, JARRELL filed two fraudulent claims for DUA benefits, one in her minor daughter's name and the other in her minor son's name, using fraudulent Social Security numbers, and falsely claiming that these minors lost employment in New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina. It is alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds totaling \$11,172 to be transmitted from the LDOL into Chase debit card accounts set up by the LDOL for access by assistance recipients (in this case, JARRELL). If convicted on all counts, JARRELL faces a maximum sentence of sixty-five years imprisonment, a \$1,500,000 fine, or both.

The charges in these four indictments resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the Zachary, Louisiana, Police Department.

ANDREW J. EALY, III, age 40, of Gonzales, Louisiana, pled guilty today before U.S. District Court Judge James J. Brady to a bill of information charging him with wire fraud in connection with the filing of applications for loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA provided assistance to the victims of disasters through low interest loans to fund the repair and restoration of storm damaged homes and businesses. The bill of information charged that on or about October 21, 2005, EALY caused an application for a home repair loan to be submitted to the SBA, and that on or about April 18, 2008, EALY caused an application for a business loan to be submitted to the SBA. The bill of information charged that EALY caused false and fraudulent receipts and invoices to be sent via facsimile to the SBA to support the claims of repairs being performed, when in fact no such work had been done. The submission of the fraudulent receipts and invoices caused the SBA to approve and issue a home repair loan totaling approximately \$94,000 and a business loan totaling approximately \$125,500. The case was investigated by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General, and the U.S.

Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. As a result of his guilty plea, EALY faces a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS, age 39, of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, pled guilty today before U.S. District Court Judge John V. Parker to a bill of information charging him with aiding and abetting making false statements in connection with the filing of an application for a Road Home Grant. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and FEMA provided assistance to victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through grants to homeowners to fund the repair and restoration of storm damaged homes. In Louisiana, grants under this program were called Road Home Grants. The bill charged that in or about January 2008, WILLIAMS used false bill of sale and receipts with the forged the signature of another on them, thereby aiding and abetting the submission of false and fraudulent documents to HUD and FEMA in support of a Road Home Grant application. The submission of the fraudulent application resulted in a loss of approximately \$28,966.60. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Inspector General. As a result of her guilty plea, WILLIAMS faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Today's indictments bring the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred sixty-nine.

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 the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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