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FEDS CHARGE ATLANTA WOMAN WITH FILING FALSE CLAIM FOR FEMA HURRICANE VICTIMS FUNDS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia; Gregory Jones, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Martin Phanco, Inspector in Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service; and Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security; today announced the arrest of NAKIA DEWUANE GRIMES, 30, of Atlanta, Georgia. GRIMES is charged in a criminal complaint with stealing money from the United States government and mail fraud based on a false claim made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for \$2,000 in relief funds available to victims of Hurricane Katrina. GRIMES is scheduled to have an initial appearance before United States Magistrate Judge Joel M. Feldman at 4:00 on September 21, 2005, in Courtroom 2022 in the Richard B. Russell Federal Building and Courthouse. According to Nahmias and the documents filed in court:

GRIMES is a resident of Atlanta, Georgia. On September 14, 2005, GRIMES submitted an application, via the Internet, to FEMA seeking a \$2,000.00 payment available to victims of Hurricane Katrina. GRIMES submitted false information on the application indicating that she was a resident of New Orleans and a victim of the hurricane. In fact, she was not a victim of the hurricane and was living in Atlanta, Georgia. GRIMES requested that her relief check of \$2,000.00 be sent to her at a relative's house in Atlanta. On September 20, 2005, GRIMES was notified by the United States Postal Service that she had a letter that she needed to sign for at the Post Office. GRIMES arrived at the Post Office and was arrested after she signed for and accepted the letter from FEMA containing the \$2,000.00 relief check.

U.S. Attorney David Nahmias said of the case: "It is shameful that someone would try to take advantage of a national tragedy by filing a false claim for money dedicated to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. While the amount of money involved in this case is not large, we will not tolerate any attempts by individuals to obtain public or private disaster relief funds to which they are not entitled. We will prosecute to the full extent of the law those who fraudulently seek funds that are needed to help rebuild the lives of the many real victims of Hurricane Katrina."

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales recently created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster related federal crimes such as charity fraud and insurance. 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.

Members of the public are reminded that the criminal complaint only contains charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation with the assistance of Inspectors with the United States Postal Inspection Service and Special Agents with the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorney Aaron M. Danzig is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or F. Gentry Shelnett, Chief, Criminal Division, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.