



**U. S. Department of Justice
U. S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**
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**HOUSTONIAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING FEMA OF HURRICANE RITA
DISASTER FUNDS**

(HOUSTON, TX) United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg today announced that Jimmie Williams, 27, of Houston, Texas, has been convicted of filing a false claim with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Rita Disaster funds.

At a hearing held yesterday, January 9, before United States District Judge Lee Rosenthal, Williams pleaded guilty to the federal felony charge. Sentencing has been set for April 13, 2006. At sentencing, Williams faces a maximum punishment of five years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Williams, who has been in federal custody without bond since his arrest in October 2005, will remain in federal custody pending his sentencing.

Williams' 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 a Houston area resident. That investigation proved that on October 3, 2005, Williams filed a claim for FEMA disaster assistance online, using a computer at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Houston, Texas. As the basis for his claim, Williams asserted that his primary residence, his apartment in the 1400 block of Redford Street in Houston, and personal property were damaged as a result of Hurricane Rita. He also claimed he had lost work as a result of the hurricane. The investigation proved Hurricane Rita had not caused damage to Williams' apartment nor did he lose employment as a result of the hurricane.

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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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