



*United States Attorney  
District of New Jersey*

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**NEWARK MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR CONSPIRACY TO STEAL  
MONEY MEANT FOR HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS**

NEWARK, N.J. – A Newark man who illegally deposited Hurricane Katrina disaster relief checks issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the tax refund check of a stranger was sentenced today to a year in prison for his role in a scheme to steal the funds, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

David Kollie, 43, was convicted in April 2011 following a four-day trial before U.S. District Judge William H. Walls. Kollie was convicted of all 19 counts charged in the Superseding Indictment on which he was tried: one count of conspiring to receive stolen government property and passing United States Treasury Checks with forged endorsements; nine substantive counts of receiving stolen government property; and nine substantive counts of passing United States Treasury checks with forged endorsements. Judge Walls also imposed the sentence today in Newark federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

Kollie received at least nine U.S. Treasury checks from a co-conspirator and deposited them, with forged endorsements, into bank accounts he controlled. Each of the Katrina-related checks was for \$2,358 – the amount FEMA had determined was three months of average rent and provided to all displaced applicants for the funds. Kollie kept \$358 from each of the checks, which he described during his trial testimony as “pocket change,” providing the remainder to his co-conspirator. Kollie kept the entire \$7,449 from the tax refund check, which he used for various personal expenses, including purchases at Macy’s and JCPenney stores.

The investigation began when one of the banks Kollie used to deposit the checks contacted the U.S. Secret Service about suspicious activity in his account.

The eight FEMA checks Kollie received were obtained through the online application process the agency set up for the displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Several victims of identity theft testified that they never knew their names or identifying information had been used to apply for the disaster assistance funds, nor did any of them live in the New Orleans area when the hurricane hit. The witnesses testified that they never endorsed the checks nor authorized Kollie to deposit the checks into his bank accounts.

Kollie also deposited a tax refund check issued to a woman from Brooklyn, N.Y., who testified that she did not receive the check as expected and had to file a claim form with the IRS

to have a new check issued. The victim did not know Kollie or his co-conspirator, sign the check, nor authorize its deposit.

In total, the conspirators stole over \$23,000 from the United States government, with Kollie receiving more than \$10,000.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Walls sentenced Kollie to serve three years of supervised release and ordered him to pay \$27,469.91 in restitution.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the U.S. Secret Service, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jacob Christine; and the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gregory K. Null for the Northeast Region, with the ongoing investigation leading to the conviction.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jacques S. Pierre and Matthew E. Beck of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Assistant Federal Public Defender Peter Carter Esq., Newark