



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Newark Field Office
Acting Special Agent in Charge Jonathan D. Larsen

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WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FILING FALSE TAX RETURN CLAIMING REFUND OF OVER \$350,000

Newark, N.J. – Halina Okla, 62, pleaded guilty in federal court before Judge Esther Salas to a one count information that charges her with filing a false 2007 tax return with the government, claiming a refund of over \$350,000. Sentencing is scheduled for September 30, 2014.

“Buyer beware! There is no secret formula to eliminate your tax obligation,” stated Jonathan D. Larsen, Acting Special Agent in Charge, IRS-Criminal Investigation, Newark Field Office. “IRS-Criminal Investigation will continue to aggressively pursue those who prepare false claims for refunds for the purpose of enriching themselves and depleting the U.S. Treasury.

At her plea hearing and according to court documents:

In 2006, Halina Okla was introduced to individuals who were associated with a business called Mid-Atlantic Trustees. Mid-Atlantic Trustees developed, marketed, and sold products designed to assist customers with hiding income and assets from the Internal Revenue Service and fraudulently attempt to discharge debt, including mortgage debt, credit card debt, and tax obligations. One of the products offered by Mid-Atlantic Trustees was something called a Beneficiary in Common, or “BIC”. The BIC involved fake “bonds” and false and fraudulent Promissory Notes, which supposedly discharged debts. Okla purchased a BIC from Mid-Atlantic Trustees and used the so-called “bond” to fraudulently claim a tax refund of approximately \$356,574.67 on her 2007 federal tax return.

The charge of making a false claim against the government carries a statutory maximum prison sentence of five years and a statutory maximum fine equal to the greatest of: (1) \$250,000; (2) twice the gross amount of any pecuniary gain derived from the offense; or (3) twice the gross amount of any pecuniary loss sustained by any victims of the offense.

The investigation was conducted by IRS-Criminal Investigation, Newark Field Office, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Jonathan D. Larsen and the U.S. Attorney's Office, under the direction of U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Zach Intrater.

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Defense counsel: William J. Hunt, Esq.