



NEWS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Los Angeles Field Office
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For Immediate Release: November 17, 2014

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CI Release #: LAFO-2014-29

Texas Man Sentenced to 3 Years Imprisonment in Identity Theft and Tax Refund Fraud Scheme

LOS ANGELES – Appearing before United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner, a man from the Houston area of Texas was sentenced today to 36 months in federal prison for his participation in a \$1.1 million identity theft and tax refund fraud scheme.

Fidelis Negbenebor, 57, of Sugar Land, Texas, was further ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$258,142.57 to the Internal Revenue Service.

Negbenebor pleaded guilty in August of this year to using the identity of another person--namely the name, date of birth, and Social Security number--to commit a tax refund scheme.

According to documents filed with the court, for some time leading up to June of 2013, Negbenebor possessed a credit report and a banking application for an unidentified individual which contained the individual's name, date of birth, and Social Security number. The banking application was used to open a Merrill Lynch account in this individual's name, which account was used to receive a fraudulently obtained tax refund in the amount of \$103,241 issued by the IRS. Furthermore, the fraudulently opened Merrill Lynch bank account had an email address associated to it which was logged into from an internet account associated with Negbenebor's residence.

Negbenebor also possessed credit reports and other personal identifying documents for two other individuals for whom fraudulent tax returns were filed.

According to the plea agreement, the total loss amount to the IRS for the identity theft and tax fraud scheme that Negbenebor participated in is \$1,131,895.

The investigation of Negbenebor was conducted by IRS Criminal Investigation in Los Angeles.

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