



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Former Portland Resident Sentenced to Prison for Tax Fraud Scheme

A former Portland, Oregon, resident was sentenced to serve 24 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release for his involvement in a fraudulent income tax refund scheme, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Justice Department's Tax Division.

Brandon Leath, 36, pleaded guilty on July 23 to one count of conspiracy to file false claims and one count of theft of government funds. U.S. District Judge for the District of Oregon Robert E. Jones also ordered Leath to pay \$55,635 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

According to court documents, Leath conspired with others, including his wife, Shwntina Ware, to file more than 227 false income tax returns fraudulently claiming more than \$1 million in refunds. The false information on the tax returns included fictitious W-2 wages and inflated withholding amounts. The co-conspirators often shared the fraudulent refunds with each other by splitting the refund into multiple bank accounts controlled by the co-conspirators or their family and friends.

Three of Leath's co-conspirators have pleaded guilty to various charges and are scheduled to be sentenced. On June 5, co-conspirator Jasmine Mason pleaded guilty and is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 18. Ware pleaded guilty on July 23 and is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 6, 2016. Co-Conspirator Tataneisha White pleaded guilty on Oct. 1 and is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 7, 2016.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo commended special agents of the IRS - Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case, and Trial Attorneys Lori A. Hendrickson and Ryan R. Raybould of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting the case. Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo also thanked the U.S. Attorney's Office of the District of Oregon for their substantial assistance.

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