



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

Date: Nov. 10, 2015

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

CI Release #: CI-2015-11-10-B

### **Two Miami Residents Plead Guilty for Involvement in Stolen Identity Tax Refund Fraud Ring**

#### ***Defendants Stole Identities of Prisoners and Deceased Individuals***

Two Miami residents pleaded guilty for their role in a stolen identity tax refund fraud conspiracy, Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Wifredo Ferrer of the Southern District of Florida announced today.

Jim Joseph and Roland Alexis pleaded guilty to one count of a multi-object conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), commit wire fraud and commit aggravated identity theft and one count of aggravated identity theft. Joseph pleaded guilty on Nov. 9 and Alexis pleaded guilty Nov. 5. According to court documents, between 2007 and July 2014, Joseph, Alexis and others conspired to defraud the United States by filing false federal income tax returns using stolen identities. Joseph and Alexis obtained the personal identification information of actual individuals, some deceased, including names, social security numbers, addresses and dates of birth, without the individuals' authorization. The stolen personal identification information belonged to prisoners and deceased individuals. Joseph, Alexis and others recruited knowing co-conspirators and unknowing victims to put Electronic Filing Identification Numbers (EFINs) in their names through which fraudulent income tax returns would be filed.

In late 2009, Alexis formed Worldwide Income Tax Multi-Services LLC and North Miami Income Tax Services. The companies were created with the intended purpose of filing fraudulent tax returns using stolen identities. Worldwide Income Tax Multi-Services was located in Miramar, Florida, and listed Alexis as President and Joseph as Vice-President. North Miami Income Tax Services was set up in Miami and listed Alexis as Registered Agent. Joseph, Alexis and others then used the stolen identities and EFINs to electronically file more than 860 fraudulent tax returns. Alexis's conduct resulted in a tax loss of \$1.8 million and Joseph's conduct resulted in a tax loss of \$1.2 million.

Both individuals face a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison and three years of supervised release for the conspiracy charge and a statutory mandatory sentence of two years in prison and one year of supervised release for the aggravated identity theft charge. Joseph and Alexis must serve the two-year sentence for aggravated identity theft in addition to any sentence the court imposes on the conspiracy charge. Both charges carry a statutory maximum fine of \$250,000.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo and U.S. Attorney Ferrer commended special agents of the IRS-Criminal Investigation and Homeland Security Investigations, who investigated the case, and Assistant Chief Gregory E. Tortella of the Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Neil Karadbil of the

Southern District of Florida, who prosecuted the case.

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