



PRESS RELEASE

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Houston Man Charged in Stolen Identity Tax Refund Fraud Scheme

A Houston, Texas, man was arrested Friday after a federal grand jury sitting in Houston indicted him for three counts of wire fraud, four counts of theft of public money and seven counts of aggravated identity theft, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Department of Justice's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson of the Southern District of Texas.

According to the allegations in the indictment, during 2015, Denzel Roberts was part of a stolen identity refund fraud (SIRF) scheme that used stolen personal identification information, including names and social security numbers, to file false federal income tax returns for tax year 2014. Roberts and others used this stolen information to access the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) "Get Transcript" web application to obtain tax information of their identity theft victims and filed fraudulent tax returns in those names. Roberts also opened several bank accounts using a fraudulent passport, directed that the fraudulent tax refunds be deposited into those accounts and withdrew the illicit proceeds.

If convicted, Roberts faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for each count of wire fraud, 10 years in prison for each count of theft of public money and a mandatory sentence of two years in prison for aggravated identity theft. He also faces substantial monetary penalties and restitution.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo and U.S. Attorney Magidson commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation and the FBI's Houston Cyber Task Force, who investigated the case and Trial Attorneys Michael C. Boteler and Grace E. Albinson of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting this case with assistance from Assistant U.S. Attorney Jimmy Sledge of the Southern District of Texas.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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