



PRESS RELEASE

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Alabama Resident and Former U.S. Postal Worker Sentenced to Prison for Involvement in Stolen Identity Tax Fraud Ring

Stole Identities of Individuals on Her Mail Route for Use in Filing False Tax Returns

A Seale, Alabama, resident and former U.S. Postal Service employee was sentenced today to serve more than five years in prison for her role in a stolen identity refund fraud (SIRF) conspiracy, Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney George L. Beck, Jr. of the Middle District of Alabama announced.

According to court documents and evidence presented at the sentencing hearing, between June 2012 and December 2013, Elizabeth Grant aka Elizabeth Williams Grant and Ann Grant, 52, conspired with others, including Tracy Mitchell of Phenix City, Alabama, and Keshia Lanier of Seale to obtain fraudulent income tax refunds by filing false federal income tax returns using stolen identities. For a fee, Grant provided co-conspirators with addresses along her mail delivery route to use in filing false tax returns. Grant then retrieved the fraudulent tax refund checks from the mail and delivered the checks to her co-conspirators. The scheme resulted in the filing of more than 700 false returns claiming more than \$1.5 million in tax refunds.

Grant pleaded guilty in November 2015 to conspiracy to defraud the United States with respect to claims, aggravated identity theft and embezzling mail. Several co-conspirators, including Mitchell and Lanier, have already pleaded guilty and were sentenced for their roles in this scheme. On Aug. 7, 2015, Mitchell was sentenced to 159 months in prison. On Sept. 25, 2015, Lanier was sentenced to 180 months in prison. In addition to the term of imprisonment, Grant was also ordered to serve three years of supervised release and pay restitution in the amount of \$978,468.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo and U.S. Attorney Beck commended special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case and Trial Attorneys Michael C. Boteler, Gregory P. Bailey and Robert J. Boudreau of the Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan Ross of the Middle District of Alabama, who prosecuted the case.

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