



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Cincinnati Field Office
Special Agent in Charge Kathy A. Enstrom

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Contact: Craig Casserly
IRS – Criminal Investigation
401 N. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 744-3130
Craig.casserly@ci.irs.gov
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LOCAL WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY IN A FALSE INCOME TAX REFUND SCHEME

CINCINNATI, OHIO – Danita Riston, 47, of Cincinnati, Ohio, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to file false claims for federal income tax refunds with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Riston faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office, announced the guilty entered December 3 before Senior U.S. District Judge Herman J. Weber.

According to court documents, between January 2007 and February 2010 Riston prepared and electronically filed false claims for federal income tax refunds with the IRS for the 2006 through 2009 income tax years. As part of this scheme, Riston included wholly false information on the income tax returns, with the exception of the taxpayers name and social security number.

Riston agreed with the individuals to prepare their income tax returns. Riston collected the individual's name, social security number, date of birth, address, and the social security number for a person they could claim as a dependent. In return, Riston promised the taxpayers a large income tax refund. Riston, as well as many of the taxpayers, knew that the income tax returns filed with the IRS were false and that the income tax refunds were fraudulent.

Riston directed the income tax refunds to be directly deposited into one of several banks accounts she either owned or controlled. Riston acquired co-signature authority on her mother's bank account and directed fraudulent income tax refunds to be deposited into that account, as well as her own account. Once Riston received the fraudulent income tax refunds, she provided a portion of the income tax refund proceeds to the taxpayer and kept the remainder for herself.

Riston's participation in the conspiracy directly resulted in an intended tax loss to the IRS in the amount of \$68,717. For purpose of restitution, the actual tax loss to the IRS as a result of Riston's involvement in this scheme was \$66,917.

"Knowingly falsifying documents filed with the IRS is a crime," said Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. "Dishonest return preparers use a variety of methods to cheat the government. The object of this refund fraud scheme was to swindle the government and the taxpaying public."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jessica W. Knight and was investigated by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation.

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