



NEWS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Los Angeles Field Office
Erick Martinez, Special Agent in Charge

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Former Monterey Park Resident Sent to Prison for Massive Identity Theft and Tax Refund Scheme

Scheme Claimed over \$1.4 Million in Bogus Tax Refunds

Los Angeles – A former Monterey Park resident living under an assumed identity was sentenced today to 40 months in federal prison for filing bogus tax returns seeking fraudulent refunds from the Internal Revenue Service using the names and Social Security numbers of persons whose identity information had been stolen or otherwise improperly disclosed.

Sang Hwoon Shin, 41, was sentenced this morning by United States District Judge George H. King who also ordered the defendant to pay restitution of over \$316,000 to the IRS.

According to documents filed with the court, Shin pleaded guilty in May of last year to all seven counts of the indictment handed down by a federal grand jury in May of 2013 which charged him with five counts of wire fraud and two counts of aggravated identity theft.

“As we approach tax filing season, those who might consider committing refund fraud and identity theft should be aware of the extremely negative consequences in doing so,” said IRS Criminal Investigation’s Special Agent in Charge Erick Martinez. “IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to vigorously pursue those who unjustly enrich themselves by filing false income tax returns.”

Over the course of a four-year period, Shin filed bogus tax returns, each of which was filed in the name of a real person whose identity had been stolen. To execute the scheme, Shin obtained fraudulent identification documents from the

California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in the names of the identity theft victims, but bearing Shin's photograph. Using the fraudulent identification documents, Shin opened bank accounts in the names of the identity theft victims for the purpose of receiving tax refund payments from the U.S. Treasury. As a result of the false tax returns filed by Shin, the U.S. Treasury wired tax refund payments to the bank accounts opened by Shin in the names of the identity theft victims. Nearly all of the tax refund payments were in amounts between \$9,000 and \$10,000. Shin withdrew the proceeds of the scheme at bank ATMs using debit cards in the identity theft victims' names.

In all, Shin admitted that the intended loss for which he is responsible is approximately \$1,446,753, including approximately \$316,469 in actual loss.

Shin has been in federal custody since his arrest in April of 2013.

The investigation of Shin was conducted by IRS Criminal Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, in conjunction with the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California.

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