



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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Contact: *CI-HQ-COMMUNICATIONSEDCATION@ci.irs.gov
IRS – Criminal Investigation

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California Resident Convicted of Conspiracy, Theft of Public Money and Aggravated Identity Theft

A federal jury sitting in Oakland, California convicted a resident of Richmond, California yesterday for his role in a conspiracy to steal identities and cash fraudulently obtained and stolen U.S. Treasury checks, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo, head of the Justice Department's Tax Division; U.S. Attorney Brian J. Stretch of the Northern District of California; and Special Agent in Charge Michael T. Batdorf of Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI).

Hugh Robinson was convicted on all charges of conspiracy to commit theft of public money, theft of public money, and aggravated identity theft following a five-day trial before U.S. District Court Judge Jeffery S. White in the Northern District of California. In November 2015, Robinson was charged, along with 10 co-defendants. According to the indictment and evidence presented at trial, from at least August 2013 through April 2015, Robinson conspired with his co-defendants to obtain the names of deceased individuals by searching California death records, and electronically file false income tax returns in the names of those deceased individuals claiming refunds. Robinson and his co-defendants listed addresses on these tax returns to which they had access to enable them to retrieve the refund checks.

According to the indictment and the evidence presented at trial, Janel McDonald, a charged co-conspirator, provided false and fraudulent California identification documents to other co-conspirators who used the false identifications to negotiate the refund checks. Robinson and other co-defendants cashed checks at various Walmart stores, including a store in Richmond, California where Robinson worked with co-conspirators to negotiate the fraudulently obtained checks. According to the criminal complaint, a search of Robinson's residence yielded U.S. Treasury checks totaling more than \$237,000.

Sentencing is scheduled for Feb. 7, 2017. Robinson faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for conspiracy to commit theft of public money, 10 years in prison for each count of theft of public money, and a mandatory sentence of two years in prison for each count of aggravated identity theft. Robinson also faces a period of supervised release and monetary penalties.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Ciralo, U.S. Attorney Stretch, and Special Agent in Charge Batdorf commended agents of IRS-CI, who conducted the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas Newman and Jose A. Olivera, and Trial Attorney Gregory Bernstein of the Justice Department's Tax Division, who prosecuted the case.

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