



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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### **California Man Pleads Guilty to Stealing IDs and U.S. Treasury Checks** *Conspired to Cash Tax Refund and Social Security Checks Worth More Than \$500,000*

An El Cerrito, California man pleaded guilty today to aggravated identity theft and conspiring to steal government funds, announced Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Stuart M. Goldberg of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Brian J. Stretch for the Northern District of California.

According to the plea agreement, Brandon Robinson, 35, and his co-conspirators, stole names of deceased individuals and used them to file federal tax returns seeking refunds. Robinson paid cashiers at stores in the Richmond-area to cash the fraudulently obtained refund checks. Robinson also cashed stolen tax refund and social security benefit checks that were intended for other individuals. Robinson admitted that he and his co-conspirators attempted to cash more than \$500,000 in fraudulently obtained and stolen checks.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 23. Robinson faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy count and a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison for the aggravated identity theft count. Robinson also faces a period of supervised release, restitution and monetary penalties.

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Goldberg and U.S. Attorney Stretch commended special agents of Internal Revenue Service–Criminal Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas Newman and Jose A. Olivera, and Trial Attorney Gregory Bernstein of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting the case.

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