



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
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Phoenix Tax Preparer Sentenced to Prison for Identity Theft

Phoenix, Ariz. – On January 23, 2017, the Honorable G. Murray Snow sentenced Kimberly Stewart, 53, to 24 months incarceration followed by one year of supervised release. Stewart pleaded guilty to aggravated identity theft on October 31, 2016, in connection with tax fraud. The defendant was ordered to pay restitution to the government in the amount of \$101,585.

Stewart owned and operated a tax preparation business from 2003 to 2010. In her plea agreement, Stewart admitted that on or between March 3, 2011, and April 15, 2011, she prepared and electronically filed a false tax return for the 2010 tax year using the name and social security number of a deceased taxpayer, the defendant's mother, who died on March 3, 2010. This tax return falsely claimed the taxpayer was entitled to an education credit and reflected that it was electronically signed by a taxpayer who had been deceased for a year. This tax return generated a refund of \$6,468 that was directed and routed into a bank account controlled by Stewart. According to the plea agreement, Stewart prepared and filed this return after being contacted by the Internal Revenue Service concerning the false returns she prepared and filed on behalf of other individuals.

"The sentence handed down this week highlights the seriousness of the defendant's conduct," said Ismael Nevarez Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Phoenix Field Office of IRS-Criminal Investigation. "Special Agents with IRS-CI are focused on protecting the integrity of our nation's tax system by investigating tax related identity theft."

The investigation in this case was conducted by Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

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