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LYNN WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY AND FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS FOR REFUNDS

BOSTON, MA - A Lynn woman was convicted yesterday in federal court of conspiracy and filing false IRS tax returns to obtain fraudulent federal refunds..

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan and Douglas A. Bricker, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office for the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, announced today that ESTHER MARIA PERCEL, age 50, of 49 Kirtland Street, Lynn, MA, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Douglas P. Woodlock to Conspiracy To File False Tax Claims and 13 counts of Filing False and Fraudulent Tax Returns.

At yesterday's plea hearing, the prosecutor told the Court that had the case proceeded to trial the Government's evidence would have proven that from February 1999 to April 2004, PERCEL participated with her daughter, Esther Angelica Arias and with Edwin Gonzalez, in a scheme to use stolen identities to file false federal and state income tax returns in the names of other individuals for the purpose of illegally collecting federal and state tax refunds.

Judge Woodlock scheduled sentencing for January 3, 2008. PERCEL faces up to 10 years in prison on the Conspiracy count, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000, and up to 3 years in prison with a fine of \$100,000 and 1 year of supervised release on each of the 13 counts of Filing False Returns. Arias and Gonzalez are pending trial scheduled for October 15, 2007.

The case was investigated by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Lynn Police Department, the Malden Police Department and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Victor A. Wild of Sullivan's Economic Crimes Unit.

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