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NEWS



Tampa Couple Sentenced To Prison For Stolen Identity Refund Fraud

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2014

Tampa, FL – U.S. District Judge Virginia Hernandez Covington today sentenced Tressa V. Guy to 10 years and one month in federal prison for conspiring to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. The court also sentenced Guy's husband, Brian E. Simmons, to 16 years in federal prison for wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. As part of their sentence, the court entered a money judgment against each in the amount of \$790,421.28, the proceeds of the wire fraud and identity theft scheme. The court also ordered Guy and Simmons to each pay \$790,421.28 in restitution.

Guy pleaded guilty on October 16, 2013. Simmons pleaded guilty to his charges on November 26, 2013.

According to court documents, Guy and Simmons, and others, orchestrated a scheme to defraud the United States Treasury by causing fraudulent federal income tax returns to be filed using stolen identities, and soliciting personal identifying information and addresses from co-conspirators in Florida and Georgia. To facilitate the scheme, the conspirators coordinated the withdrawal of fraudulently obtained tax refund amounts from prepaid debit cards. The identities used to file the fraudulent tax returns in this scheme belonged to individuals living in various states across the country. As part of the conspiracy, at least 322 federal income tax returns for tax year 2011 were filed from nine Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, claiming refunds of \$2,701,844.00. The scheme resulted in a loss of \$790,421.28 to the Internal Revenue Service.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, the Tampa Police Department, and the Monroe County (Georgia) Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew J. Mueller and Trial Attorney Jason H. Poole of the Department of Justice, Tax Division.

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