Millbrook, Alabama Woman Charged with Conspiring to Use Stolen Identities of Student Loan Borrowers on False Tax Returns

(Washington, D.C.) – Janika Fernae Bates of Millbrook, Ala., was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of identity theft, wire fraud, and conspiracy to make false claims for tax refunds, the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced today. Bates was previously employed at Electronic Data Systems in Montgomery, Ala.

John A. DiCicco, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Tax Division, and Leura G. Canary, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, made the announcement.

According to the indictment filed against her, Bates obtained the names and Social Security numbers of student loan borrowers from the databases at her employer and conspired to use the stolen identifying information to steal money from the government. The indictment further alleges that Bates and a co-conspirator fraudulently obtained refund anticipation loans from the bank HSBC predicated on the fraudulently filed tax returns.

An indictment merely alleges that a crime has been committed, and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. If convicted, Janika Fernae Bates faces a minimum of 2 years in prison, a maximum of 354 years in prison, and a maximum fine of $6,250,000.

This case was investigated by IRS Criminal Investigation and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Monica Stump and Tax Division Trial Attorney Justin K. Gelfand.

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