



NEWS RELEASE

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ANCHORAGE WOMAN SENTENCED ON MULTIPLE TAX CHARGES

Anchorage, AK – United States Attorney Karen L. Loeffler and Principal Deputy Assistant General John A. DiCicco of the U.S. Department of Justice, Tax Division, announced today, March 20, 2012, that Anchorage resident Frances Yvonne Rowland, 43, a resident of Anchorage, Alaska, was sentenced to 75 months in federal prison for the crimes of tax fraud, credit card fraud, and identity theft. Rowland was also ordered to pay a fine in the amount of \$25,000.

In August 2011, Rowland pled guilty to three felony charges stemming from a scheme to defraud clients and family members of nearly \$1 million. Specifically, Rowland pled guilty to one count of obstructing the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), one count of credit card fraud, and one count of aggravated identity theft.

Between 2005 and 2008, Rowland, who has also been known as Yvonne Rowland, Frances Yvonne Carter and Frances Leary, owned and operated several businesses in Anchorage and Wasilla, Alaska, including Carter and Associates, LLC; Carter Organization, LLC; Carter Financial Group, LLC; and Carter Tax, Inc. More recently, she operated under the name A-Plus Tax and Accounting Services. These businesses provided accounting and tax preparation services to individuals and small businesses.

The evidence showed that using her businesses, Rowland devised and executed a scheme to fraudulently obtain money from her clients. Her scheme followed a general pattern in which she first prepared tax returns on behalf of her clients. When her clients owed taxes, Rowland persuaded many of them to pay their tax monies to her "trust" account, promising that she would then transfer the funds to the IRS. In all, Rowland persuaded at least nine separate clients to transfer over \$700,000 to accounts that she controlled.

Rather than paying her clients' monies to the IRS, Rowland instead transferred the funds to accounts that she controlled and used the money to pay business and personal expenses. These expenses included personal travel, home mortgage payments, payments toward other clients' tax liabilities, and payments of court-ordered restitution.

The evidence showed that in order to conceal the fact that she was falsely obtaining and using her client's money, Rowland filed false documents with the IRS. These included forms requesting extensions of time to file returns, when in fact the clients' returns had been completed and the defendant had been given the monies to pay the taxes that were due and owing. The defendant also prepared and filed tax returns with the IRS that were different than the returns she had prepared for and provided copies of to her clients. The returns filed with the IRS reported different numbers relating to the amount of taxes owed or the amount of payments made by the clients, thereby concealing from the clients and the IRS the fact that the defendant had kept the money rather than paid it to the IRS.

After clients became aware of the fact that the payments to the IRS had not been made, Rowland delinquently paid the taxes, accrued interest, and incurred penalties on behalf of the taxpayers, often with funds she had obtained from other clients who mistakenly thought that the money was being used to pay their own taxes.

As part of her scheme to obstruct the IRS, Rowland also filed a false personal income tax return in her own name in which she claimed to be a low-income taxpayer who qualified for the earned income tax credit. The return alleged multiple false items.

Rowland was also sentenced today on charges that she stole a family member's identity and used it to commit credit card fraud. Using the stolen identity, Rowland opened numerous credit card accounts and ultimately caused over \$300,000 to be charged to the cards.

United States District Judge Timothy M. Burgess sentenced Rowland to serve 75 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release monitored by a U.S. probation officer. During supervision, she is prohibited from preparing tax returns and is required to notify all present and future clients of her felony convictions. She was also ordered to pay a \$25,000 fine.

In imposing sentence, Judge Burgess stated that he was concerned that Rowland had not learned her lesson following a four year term in state prison imposed in 1996. That sentence stemmed from Rowland's embezzlement of nearly \$200,000 when she was employed as a bookkeeper for Carlile Trucking. Judge Burgess stated that what happened in Rowland's state case should have been a "wake up call" for her and further expressed concern about the need to protect the public from Rowland's criminal behavior.

Prior to sentence being imposed, numerous victims addressed the court in person or in writing about the impact that Rowland's crimes had on their lives.

The Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division conducted the investigation that led to the prosecution of this case. Prosecution of the case was handled jointly by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas C. Bradley and U.S. Department of Justice, Tax Division Trial Attorney Stephanie Carowan Courter.

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