



U.S. Department of Justice

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May 21, 2009

Event: Indictment

Defendant: Earnestine Sears

Brighton Return Preparer Indicted on Tax Charges

Earnestine Sears, of Brighton, was indicted on two counts of filing false personal tax returns, signed under penalties of perjury and 42 counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of false federal income tax returns, announced United States Attorney Terrence Berg.

Mr. Berg was joined in the announcement by Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation's Special Agent in Charge Maurice M. Aouate.

According to the indictment, Sears prepared and filed false 2003 and 2004 personal individual income tax returns reporting only \$450 gross income on her schedule "C" business, when in fact she knowingly grossed over \$50,000. Sears also prepared tax returns for individuals for the calendar years 2003 through 2005, where these tax returns claimed false items including charitable contributions, donated property, and employee expenses, among others items. These taxpayers were not entitled to claim these credits, expenses and

deductions in the amounts listed on their returns, which totaled over \$675,000.

“Every tax return preparer has a high level of responsibility, not only to their clients but to the government as well,” said Aouate. “No one is entitled to an undeserved windfall and refunds should only be issued to taxpayers who are entitled to them.”

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by special agents of the IRS Criminal Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard L. Delonis.