



U.S. Department of Justice

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**Sep 21, 2009**

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**Event: Indictment**

**Defendant: Roger M. Lawrence, Jr.**

### **Flint Man Recruits Homeless to File False Tax Returns**

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Roger M. Lawrence, Jr., 35, of Flint, Michigan, was arraigned today in federal court on charges of conspiracy to make a false claim with the Internal Revenue Service and 11 counts of aiding and abetting false claims, and criminal forfeiture of \$90,500, United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced.

Mr. Berg was joined in the announcement by Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division.

According to the indictment, during 2007, Lawrence Jr. targeted homeless or transient individuals, along with relatives with little or no income, providing them with a false Form W-2 containing fictitious wages and withholdings. The false Forms W-2 listed their employers as either General Motors Corporation, McDonalds, or Handleman Corporation, when in fact, none of the filers were ever employed by these companies. Lawrence Jr. or his co-conspirators directed the filers to Jackson Hewitt and H&R Block, who unwittingly prepared the filers' returns using the fraudulent Forms W-2. The returns claimed total refunds due of over

\$47,000.

Lawrence appeared this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge R. Steven Whalen and was temporarily detained pending a hearing tomorrow.

United States Attorney Terrence Berg said, "Fabricating phony W-2 forms in order to generate undeserved tax refunds defrauds the U.S. treasury and is unfair to those tax payers who pay their fair share."

"At the IRS, protecting taxpayer money is a matter we treat with extreme seriousness," 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 Julie A. Beck.