



U.S. Department of Justice

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Event: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Anthony Lavigne

Ann Arbor Businessman Pleads Guilty to Obstructing IRS

Anthony Lavigne, 43, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, pleaded guilty yesterday to engaging in a fraudulent Offer in Compromise scheme, attempting to obstruct and impede the Internal Revenue Service announced United States Attorney Terrence Berg.

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

According to court records, in 2005, Lavigne submitted an Offer in Compromise to the IRS stating that he did not have the ability to pay his tax due and owing to the IRS. An offer in compromise is an agreement between a taxpayer and IRS that settles the taxpayer's tax liabilities for less than the full amount owed. He also stated that he could not find decent employment, had would have to borrow money from his parents in order to pay his offer in compromise amount of \$1,290, in lieu of over \$2.4 million due to the IRS. To support his claim, Lavigne submitted a false document to the IRS stating that he lived with his parents, did not own or operate a business, did not maintain a checking account, and only earned \$900 per

month. He also told the IRS Revenue Agent that he underwent cancer radiation treatment at the University of Michigan Hospital three times a week. In truth, Lavigne lived in an apartment in Ann Arbor, owned and operated a business known as "Sacred Earth" and was the signator on the company's checking account. He also used Sacred Earth's funds for his personal expenditures and never received radiation treatments at the University of Michigan Hospital.

"This case is another example of my office's commitment to aggressively prosecute tax fraud. I commend the vigilance of the IRS in detecting this type of crime. We will take all appropriate actions against those who fail to comply with the Internal Revenue Service." United States Attorney Berg said. "

IRS Criminal Investigation Division Special Agent in Charge Maurice Aouate said, "Lying to the government in order to take advantage of a program designed to help taxpayers is a crime we cannot and will not tolerate."

Mr. Berg commended the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Noceba Southern is prosecuting the case.