

NEWS

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Four Men Arrested for Filing Fraudulent Tax Returns That Falsely Claimed Refunds Totaling Nearly \$11.5 Million

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NEWARK – Four men were arrested in New Jersey today on a criminal Complaint that charges them with conspiring to defraud the United States through the filing of thousands of fraudulent U.S. Individual Income Tax Returns which claimed false tax refunds totaling nearly \$11.5 million, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Early this morning, Adebowale Sheba, 38, a.k.a “Kolawole Sheba” and “Adebayo Michael,” of Franklin Township (Somerset County); Adeyemisi Toyusini, 50, a.k.a. “Johnson Coker” and “Johnny Tunde,” of Old Bridge; Taiwo Daisi, 39, of Roselle; and Adedeni Adenni, 50, of Lumberton, were arrested at their residences by U.S. Postal Inspectors and Special Agents with the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration.

The defendants are each charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States, specifically through the submission of false and fraudulent claims to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

At court appearances today, U.S. Magistrate Judge Patty Shwartz ordered all of the defendants detained pending trial. The country of origin for all of the defendants is Nigeria. Three of the defendants are non-citizens, and two are in the United States illegally.

The Complaint alleges that from 2005 through 2009 the defendants together filed thousands of U.S. Individual Income Tax Return Forms 1040 seeking nearly \$11.5 million in tax refunds. According to the Complaint, approximately \$3.2 million of the claimed refunds were released by the Internal Revenue Service. Analysis of bank accounts controlled by the defendants identified deposits of approximately \$2.7 million in tax refunds, according to the Complaint.

The tax returns were allegedly filed using the names, dates of birth and Social Security numbers of victims of identity theft. According to the Complaint, a number of the identity theft victims were interviewed by law enforcement officials and confirmed that the returns filed for multiple years in their names were not done so of their own accord.

The Complaint alleges that the defendants listed approximately 41 different addresses, which they controlled, on the filed tax returns. Some of the addresses belonged to the defendants, others belonged to co-conspirators and others still were post office boxes. The refund checks mailed to these addresses were subsequently deposited into bank accounts held in the defendants’ names, aliases and businesses, as well as those of other co-conspirators, according to the Complaint.

“The United States Postal Inspection Service has a long, proud tradition of thwarting scam artists who prey on innocent victims,” said Inspector in Charge David Collins, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Newark Division.

“Refunds are issued to individuals who are entitled to them,” said William P. Offord, Special Agent in Charge of IRS Criminal Investigation. “IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to aggressively pursue those who prepare false claims for refunds.”

The charge of conspiracy to defraud the United States carries a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of the greatest of \$250,000 or twice the aggregate gain to the defendants or loss to the victims.

A criminal Complaint is merely an accusation, and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Fishman credited the member agencies of the New Jersey Financial Fraud Task Force, which is led by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge David Collins, and comprises Special Agents with IRS Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord; Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Edward Ryan; and the U.S. Secret Service, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Cynthia Wofford, for the investigation leading to today’s charges.

This government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee D. Vartan of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Public Protection Unit in Newark.

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