



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact : Sue McKinney

CONSPIRATORS FILE FALSE TAX RETURNS

Maxwell Wood, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia, announces the sentencing of Thewander Dondrell Davis, age 38, of Norfolk, VA, on September 13, 2007, in Albany, Georgia by the Honorable W. Louis Sands, United States District Judge for the Middle District of Georgia. Davis' codefendants, Louis Devan Cobb, Jr., age 37, of Albany, GA, and Roderick Duane Whitaker, age 37, of Douglasville, GA, were previously sentenced by Judge Sands on June 14, 2007, and May 24, 2007, respectively. Davis, Cobb, and Whitaker pled guilty to conspiring with one another to file false tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 286. Davis was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 9 months; Cobb was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 12 months; and Whitaker was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 14 months. Davis, Cobb, and Whitaker were also ordered to pay restitution to the Internal Revenue Service in the amounts of \$66,011, \$120,089, and \$39,649, respectively. Each defendant was ordered to serve a term of 3 years on supervised release following his prison term.

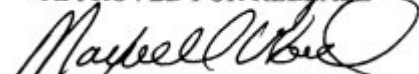
According to the defendants' plea agreements, Cobb operated a tax return preparation business in Albany, GA, which during the 2002 tax filing season was known as TAX PLUS. Beginning with the 2003 tax filing season, Cobb operated his business through a JACKSON HEWITT TAX SERVICE franchise.

The defendants persuaded individual taxpayers to provide their names, social security numbers, dependent information, and W-2 forms to them for the purpose of having their tax returns prepared by Cobb. The defendants used the information provided by the taxpayers to create new W-2 forms that were either completely fictitious, or which were falsified by increasing the income or tax withholding figures. The defendants also created false schedules to claim business losses which the taxpayers did not incur. Cobb submitted the false tax returns and related forms to the IRS to obtain inflated tax refunds to which the taxpayers were not entitled. Upon issuance of the inflated refund, the defendants would either keep the entire refund or pay only a small portion of it to the taxpayer.

Davis recruited five taxpayers to give him their tax information to send to Cobb. Whitaker recruited six taxpayers whose returns were prepared by Cobb. Cobb also prepared false tax returns for taxpayers who were not recruited by Davis or Whitaker. Twenty-one fraudulent returns were filed claiming refunds totaling \$165,298.

The case was investigated by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney K. Alan Dasher. Inquiries regarding the case should be directed to Sue McKinney, Public Affairs Specialist, United States Attorney's Office at (478) 621-2602.

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