



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois
Western Division*

*John G. McKenzie
Assistant United States Attorney*

*308 West State Street - Room 300
Rockford, Illinois 61101*

*PH: (815) 987-4444
FAX: (815) 987-4236*

February 13, 2006

ROCKFORD TAX PREPARER SENTENCED TO 56 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR PREPARING FALSE TAX RETURNS

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and BYRAM TICHENOR, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, today made the following announcement:

On February 10, 2006, in Rockford, United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard sentenced **JOHN H. BELL**, 62 (DOB: 10/04/42), of Rockford, to 56 months in federal prison for preparing false federal income tax returns for others, and for filing a false federal income tax return for himself. The Court ordered that Bell repay the costs of his prosecution, \$1,942, to the government and pay a \$400 fine. The Court also ordered that after Bell is released from federal prison, he is to serve one year on supervised release during which Bell is forbidden from preparing anyone else's tax returns.

Bell was indicted on March 1, 2005, and charged with three counts of preparing false federal income tax returns for others, and one count of filing a false federal income tax return for himself. The indictment alleged that Bell, the owner of Bell's Income Tax Service and of Real Estate Investors #2462, Inc. ("REI"), prepared false income tax returns for others. In order to support those returns, Bell attached W-2s to the returns that falsely stated the amounts of income the taxpayers received from REI and falsely stated that REI had withheld federal income tax from the taxpayers when in fact, no such taxes had been withheld by Bell or his corporation.

The indictment further charged that Bell filed an income tax return for himself that falsely stated that \$8,360 in federal income tax had been withheld from him, when no federal income tax had been withheld by REI. As a result of his own false return, Bell wrongfully attempted to obtain a refund of \$8,701. Bell was found guilty by a jury on all four charges on October 26, 2005, following a three-day trial.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service. It was prosecuted in United States District Court by Assistant United States Attorney JOHN G. McKENZIE.

#