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**TAX PREPARER PLEADS GUILTY TO FILING FALSE
CLAIMS FOR TAX REFUNDS**

Prison Inmates Solicited for Social Security Numbers

SHREVEPORT, La. - United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Leo Cortez Vinson, Jr., aka "Sean Simms," 37, of Shreveport, La., pleaded guilty to filing fraudulent claims for federal income tax refunds. Vinson was indicted by a federal grand jury in June 2011 on 14 counts of aiding and assisting in making false returns.

In early 2009, Vinson prepared and electronically filed 22 fraudulent Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 1040 Returns for the 2008 tax year, resulting in a loss to the IRS of \$93,265. Vinson solicited inmates from Louisiana state prisons to provide him with Social Security numbers and other identifying information of inmates which he used to claim false dependents on the income tax returns. Many of the returns contained false business income or expenses and false Individual Retirement Account (IRA) deductions.

Vinson's plea was to one count of aiding and assisting in making a false return. He faces a maximum penalty of three years in prison or a fine of \$100,000, or both. His sentencing will be held on November 30, 2011.

U. S. Attorney Stephanie Finley stated, "Our system depends on the vast majority of taxpayers who honestly comply with our tax laws. Therefore, we will continue to prosecute those who create schemes to violate these laws. "

Jim Lee, Special Agent in Charge, IRS - Criminal Investigation, stated that "the IRS is committed to working with other federal agencies to aggressively investigate and prosecute the filing of false tax returns using the identities of those incarcerated. This refund scheme has been growing in popularity, but the IRS will be diligent in their efforts to stop it."

The case was investigated by Special Agent Darrin Heusel, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Cristina Walker.

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