



United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut Press Release

February 4, 2009 TAX PREPARER ADMITS FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS, STEALING IDENTITIES

Nora R. Dannehy, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that GABRIELLE PIERCE, 28, of Enfield, formerly of New Britain, pleaded guilty today before United States Magistrate Judge Donna F. Martinez in Hartford to one count of conspiracy to defraud the government, one count making a false claim against the United States, and one count of identity theft. The charges stem from PIERCE's role in fraudulent tax return preparation scheme.

According to documents filed with the Court and statements made in court, from 2003 until 2005, PIERCE was an employee of *Check Stop of Connecticut, LLC*, and supervised a tax preparation business from an office located at 190 Farmington Avenue in Hartford. In pleading guilty, PIERCE admitted that, between January and April 2004, she and another individual prepared and electronically filed numerous fraudulent federal individual income tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service. PIERCE acknowledged that fraudulent returns were prepared and made in two different ways. First, she and her co-conspirator used stolen identities of individuals in the preparation of bogus tax returns. Second, a number of other individuals collaborated with PIERCE and her co-conspirator to prepare and file fraudulent tax returns, and then shared in the proceeds from the fraud.

The total amount of the false and fraudulent tax returns submitted by PIERCE in 2004 and 2005, for the tax years 2003 and 2004, was \$156,895.

PIERCE is scheduled to be sentenced by Chief United States District Judge Robert N. Chatigny on April 26, 2009, at which time PIERCE faces up to 15 years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine on the identity theft count, five years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine on the conspiracy to defraud the government count, and five years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for making a false claim against the government.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James G. Genco.

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Tom Carson
(203) 821-3722
thomas.carson@usdoj.gov

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