



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE
ATTORNEY SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS
IN PRISON, FINED \$250,000
FOR IMPEDING THE IRS

SALT LAKE CITY – Thomas Wood, a practicing attorney from Cottonwood Heights, was sentenced today to three years in prison and fined \$250,000 for corruptly endeavoring to impede the Internal Revenue Service and failing to file federal income tax returns for two years. Wood, who was convicted by a jury on August 4, 2008, after a week-long trial, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dee Benson. Wood also was ordered to pay \$56,852 in restitution to the United States Treasury.

According to the indictment and evidence presented at trial, from 1998 through 2002, Wood helped two tax criminals, Glenn Ambort and John Benson, hide millions of dollars in income. In those years, Ambort and Benson were awaiting trial in a federal prosecution for conspiracy to commit tax fraud. While assisting in their defense, Wood used several bank accounts that he held in trust to hide millions in income that Ambort and Benson were taking from the MyCor Investment Club, a Canadian Ponzi scheme. That scheme was later investigated by the Utah Division of Securities, and for his involvement, Wood pled guilty four years ago in state court to a misdemeanor securities violation.

The federal prosecution that culminated in today's sentencing addressed the hundreds of thousands of dollars that Wood spent for himself from MyCor investors' funds as well as the millions he spent on behalf of Ambort and Benson to buy, among other things, homes in upper Deer Valley, Draper, and Roosevelt, Utah, as well as in Malibu and San Luis Obispo, California. To facilitate the use of this income without drawing the attention of tax authorities, Wood used non-interest bearing domestic trust accounts to receive and disburse funds, including one in the name of The Family Foundation, an entity he formed to help support the Goodman family, a popular singing group at the time. Wood also opened up and managed the use of offshore debit card accounts in the Bahamas for himself and others.

Evidence showed that Wood had not filed a tax return since the 1980s. In the two years for which he was prosecuted, 2000 and 2001, his gross income was more than \$180,000 and \$56,000, respectively. The income came primarily from investor funds under his control in his nominee trust accounts that he used to pay for personal expenses.

"Mr. Wood's case is troubling in that it arose from the legal profession. It is our hope that this prosecution, the federal prison sentence Mr. Wood received, and the significant fine he was ordered to pay will help promote the integrity of the income tax laws by discouraging others from ignoring or circumventing their obligations," U.S. Attorney Brett L. Tolman said today.

Jeanne Killoran, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the IRS Criminal Investigation Las Vegas Field Office, stated, "The type of financial arrangements Wood participated in on behalf of others are viewed as fraudulent schemes to evade payment of taxes. It is a top priority for us to prosecute individuals who would promote or assist in these types of actions."

The case was prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian D. Bailey and Timothy J. Stockwell. The Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, assisted in the investigation.

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