



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Bobby “Sweets” Coward, Jr.

Detroit Loan Officer Goes to Jail for Conspiracy to Defraud IRS

Bobby “Sweets” Coward, Jr., 31, of Detroit, Michigan, a loan officer, was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, followed by two years supervised release as the result of pleading guilty to aiding others in the filing of false claims with the Internal Revenue Service, announced Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Maurice Aouate, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

According to court records, between January and April 2003, Coward, Jr., conspired and agreed with Vassalo Russell and Eric Tyler, among others, to submit false federal income tax returns claiming false, fictitious, and fraudulent income, tax withholdings, and refunds from the Internal Revenue Service. Specifically, Coward, Jr. provided false Forms W-2 to taxpayers. They attempted to defraud the Internal Revenue Service of over \$113,000.

Acting U.S. Attorney Berg said, “Our American system of voluntary filing of tax returns depends on the honesty and integrity of citizens. When loan officers such as the defendant in this case conspire to submit numerous false claims, we have a serious breakdown of the

system that requires criminal prosecution. I congratulate the team from our office and the IRS that successfully pursued this tax fraud ring.”

“The IRS Fraud Detection Center in Andover, Massachusetts, picked up on this fraudulent claim scheme, made on the behalf of various individuals in the metro Detroit area,” said Aouate. “As the result of the Fraud Detection Center's timely efforts, along with IRS Criminal Investigation, very few of the refunds were actually paid out by IRS.”

Acting United States Attorney Berg commended the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation for its diligent investigation leading to the successful prosecution of Bobby Coward, Jr., Vassalo Russell and Eric Tyler. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.