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HUSBAND AND WIFE SENTENCED IN TAX REFUND SCHEME

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and IRS Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge, Victor S. O. Song, announced today that ADELA JIMENEZ, 39, of Porterville, was sentenced to 18 months in custody in connection with the illegal tax refund scheme, to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay an assessment of \$100 and to make restitution in the amount of \$31,013.59 to the Internal Revenue Service, to be paid jointly and severally with her husband and co-defendant, JOSE JIMENEZ, 39, of Porterville, who was previously sentenced to 18 months in custody on May 24, 2004.

These cases were the result of the outstanding investigative efforts of numerous agents and investigative personnel at the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service.

In connection with her guilty plea, ADELA JIMENEZ admitted that in furtherance of the scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service, she used Mexican Voter Registration cards from Mexico to obtain Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) from the IRS. She also admitted that after receiving ITINs from the IRS, she used the ITINs to have false tax returns, and false Forms W-2 prepared which were then mailed to the IRS. She admitted to renting, or having access to, numerous post office boxes in Terra Bella, Strathmore, Porterville, and Woodville which were used for the purpose of receiving false tax refund checks. She further admitted to knowing that the tax refund checks which were sent to those post office boxes were false. ADELA JIMENEZ and her husband, JOSE JIMENEZ, also agreed not to contest the civil forfeiture of real property in Porterville and admitted to knowing that the tax refund checks they received from the IRS were made payable to numerous different individuals, none of whom were known to them to exist.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Sheila K. Oberto, who prosecuted the cases involving false tax refund schemes, these cases are part of a crackdown by the IRS on numerous tax refund schemes operating in the Central Valley. The schemes consist of individuals who submit false 1040 Individual Income Tax Returns to the IRS in order to receive false refund checks. As a result of the crackdown, 23 individuals have pled guilty to date.

According to SAC Victor S. O. Song, "These cases represent a significant priority for the IRS. The numerous prosecutions that have resulted from this investigation are proof that the IRS is committed to combating false tax return schemes such as this and that participants face jail time."

According to United States Attorney Scott, "The United States Attorney's Office is pleased to have joined with the IRS to target this wide-scale fraud. Our vigorous prosecution efforts should serve as notice to others who would attempt to engage in false tax return schemes."

A copy of this news release is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae/home>, select Press Releases.

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