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**COUPLE ADMIT MAKING FALSE CLAIMS IN CONNECTION
WITH FRAUDULENT TAX REFUND SCHEME**

FRESNO, CA--United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that ANTONIO RAMOS, 31, and BLANCA RAMOS RAMOS, 28, of Terra Bella, pled guilty February 18, 2003 before United States District Court Judge Anthony W. Ishii, to making false claims against the United States in connection with an illegal tax refund scheme.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Mark Cullers, Jonathan Conklin, and Sheila K. Oberto, who are prosecuting the case, the defendants were part of a group of individuals who allegedly executed one of the numerous tax refund schemes operating in the Central Valley. The schemes consisted of individuals who submitted false 1040 Individual Income Tax Returns to the Internal Revenue Service in order to receive false refund checks.

ANTONIO and BLANCA RAMOS admitted that in furtherance of the scheme to defraud the Internal Revenue Service, they made or presented, or assisted in causing to be made or presented, 1040 Individual Income Tax Returns for non-existent individuals or tax returns which contained false Forms W-2. ANTONIO and BLANCA RAMOS also admitted to renting, or having access to, post office boxes in Terra Bella and Ducor, California, to which false tax refund checks were sent. ANTONIO RAMOS further admitted to receiving and cashing false tax refund checks.

The defendants are scheduled for sentencing on April 28, 2003. They face five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service.

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