



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814

916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900

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HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM SENTENCED TO IN TAX REFUND SCHEME

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today ANTONIO RAMOS, 31, and his wife BLANCA RAMOS RAMOS, 28, of Terra Bella, were sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Anthony W. Ishii in Fresno in connection with a conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service. ANTONIO RAMOS was sentenced to 18 months in custody, to be followed by a three year term of supervised release and an assessment of \$100. His wife, BLANCA RAMOS, was sentenced to probation for a term 36 months and an assessment of \$100.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Mark Cullers and Sheila K. Oberto, who are prosecuted the case, the case was part of a crackdown by the IRS on 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 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.

As a result of the scheme, over \$13.3 million in false claims for refunds were submitted to the Internal Revenue Service. The investigative efforts of the Internal Revenue Service have prevented the recovery of over \$10 million made by as many as 35 people involved in this scheme and similar conspiracy schemes.

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

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