

The United States Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

Press Release

WEST PALM BEACH TAX RETURN PREPARER PLED GUILTY TO FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS

March 27, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and Charles E. Hunter, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Miami Field Office, announced that defendant, **Debbie Ward, a/k/a Debbie Louise Grant**, 40, pled guilty today in West Palm Beach, Florida, before United States District Court Judge Donald M. Middlebrooks to two (2) counts of filing false claims for refunds with the Internal Revenue Service.

On February 2, 2007, Ward was charged in Count 1 of a ten (10) count Indictment with filing a false claim for tax refund on her personal tax return, filed in 2002. That return falsely claimed entitlement to a refund of \$4,737. The Indictment also alleged that Ward operated a tax preparation service called "Debbie's Tax Service" in 2002 and 2003. The Indictment further charged Ward in Counts 2 through 10 with specific instances of filing fraudulent income tax returns with false claims for refunds ranging from \$3,000 to \$9,693 on behalf of her business clients, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 287.

Today, Ward pled guilty to Counts 1 and 2 of the Indictment. Sentencing is scheduled for May 29, 2007 at 11:00a.m. Ward faces a statutory maximum sentence of five (5) years' imprisonment per count and fines of up to \$250,000 per count.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the Internal Revenue Service. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Lauren Jorgensen in the West Palm Beach office.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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