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## MONROE TAX PREPARERS SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

**Monroe, Louisiana** . . . FREDDIE OLIVER COOPER, 59, of Compton, California, and RONALD LATRON JONES, 49, of Monroe, Louisiana, former tax preparers for B12 Income Tax Service in Monroe, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Robert G. James for preparing and filing false tax returns, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. COOPER was sentenced to a term of 21 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$56,168.97 in restitution. JONES was sentenced to a term of 33 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$89,586.00 in restitution.

COOPER and JONES plead guilty October 6, 2008, to one count of conspiracy to commit tax fraud and one count of aiding and assisting in making and subscribing a false return. COOPER and JONES have admitted to inflating the amount of tax refund owing to customers and charging customers inflated prices to prepare false tax returns. In preparation of the federal income tax returns, COOPER and JONES included fraudulently created Schedule C business income and inaccurate calculations for the Earned Income Tax Credit, fraudulent dependent exemptions, and fraudulent Forms 1099.

The IRS identified approximately 22 taxpayers who had received refunds based on false tax returns prepared by COOPER and JONES from 2003 to 2005, with a resulting tax loss of approximately \$109,740.56.

United States Attorney Donald W. Washington stated: “These defendants who are thieves, plain and simple, executed a scheme to steal funds from the U.S. Treasury by falsifying tax returns. We must vigilantly protect taxpayer dollars, and do what we can to ensure that tax fraudsters are exposed to long prison terms. This office will aggressively pursue and prosecute those who violate federal tax laws.”

Special Agent in Charge of Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Michael J. De Palma stated: “We are pleased with today’s sentence. At the IRS, protecting taxpayer money is a matter we take extremely serious. An integral part of the agency’s mission involves detecting and catching fraudulent refund claims. IRS Criminal Investigation is determined to stop these false tax refund schemes. There have been several individuals from Northeast Louisiana sentenced for refund fraud schemes in recent years. Special Agents of IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to work with the United States Attorney’s Office to prosecute, to the fullest extent of the law, those individuals involved in refund fraud schemes.”

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations, New Orleans Field Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cytheria D. Jernigan.

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