



**U. S. Department of Justice
U. S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas**
Chuck Rosenberg • United States Attorney

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FORMER CITY OF HOUSTON EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO PRISON

Defendant Had Prepared False Tax Returns for Clients

(HOUSTON, TX) - United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg today announced that late this afternoon, convicted fraudulent tax return preparer Jerome J. Harris of Missouri City, Texas, was sentenced to 57 months in prison, to be followed by one year supervised release. The sentence is the maximum sentence imposable under the applicable U.S. Sentencing Guideline range. United States District Judge further ordered that, effective immediately, Harris be prohibited from preparing tax returns or assisting tax payers in audits. Harris was convicted of 21 felony counts of willfully preparing fraudulent income tax returns for his clients in September 2005 following a jury trial.

The evidence at trial and at sentencing proved Harris was a full-time employee of the Department of Public Works and Engineering for the City of Houston, who also owned and operated Jay's Bookkeeping and Tax Service, located at his residence in Missouri City, Texas. At today's sentencing, Judge Atlas found that Harris had prepared hundreds of false tax returns for the 1995 through 2000 tax years resulting in claims for fraudulent tax refunds by his clients totaling almost \$1.3 million.

Harris was ordered to surrender himself to the United States Marshal Service to begin serving his prison sentence by noon on February 3, 2006.

United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg and Assistant Attorney General Eileen J. O'Connor thanked Department of Justice Tax Division Trial Attorneys Jenny Grus and Jen Ihlo and special agents of the Houston office of the Internal Revenue Service for their work resulting in the successful investigation and prosecution of this case.

Additional information about the Justice Department's Tax Division and its enforcement efforts may be found at www.usdoj.gov/tax.

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