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**MODESTO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FALSE TAX RETURN SCHEME**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that ANTHONY SILLEMON, 35, of Modesto, California, plead guilty this morning to filing false claims against the United States before U.S. District Court Judge Frank C. Damrell, Jr. Judgment and sentencing is set before Judge Damrell for July 8, 2002 at 9:00 a.m., where SILLEMON faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine.

As part of his guilty plea, SILLEMON admitted that during the period of January through April of 2000, and January through April of 2001, he prepared false Forms W-2 on behalf of himself and others, which were submitted to the Internal Revenue Service in order to obtain fraudulent tax refunds. The Forms W-2 SILLEMON prepared listed the claimant's correct name, but contained false information about the claimant's employer and the amount of income earned. These false Forms W-2 reflected a sufficient amount of withheld income to entitle the claimant to the Earned Income Credit, a subsidy for low income families, and resulted in an average fraudulent refund of approximately \$4,300. In total, SILLEMON was responsible for the submission of fraudulent returns to the IRS seeking in excess of \$171,000 in refunds. SILLEMON admitted as part of his plea that in exchange for acquiring these false Forms W-2, he received, or expected to receive, a percentage of the fraudulent returns ultimately obtained.

SILLEMON is the second defendant this month to plead guilty to being part of a fraudulent tax return scheme. On April 3, 2002, HENRY MAURICE HUNTER, 30, of Stockton, California, plead guilty to filing false claims against the United States before Chief U.S. District Court Judge William B. Shubb. Similar to SILLEMON, HUNTER admitted that during the period of January through April of 2001, he obtained false Forms W-2 on behalf of himself and others, which were submitted to the Internal Revenue Service in order to obtain fraudulent tax refunds in the form of the Earned Income Credit. In total, HUNTER was responsible for the submission of fraudulent returns to the IRS seeking in excess of \$270,000 in refunds.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James P. Arguelles and was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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