



PRESS RELEASE

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SILVER CITY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
STOLEN IDENTITY REFUND FRAUD

LAS CRUCES – **Douglas Kuester**, a tax preparer from Silver City, N.M., pleaded guilty today to one count each of filing false claims and aggravated identity theft, the Department of Justice, United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced today. Kuester had been indicted on January 18, 2012.

According to the plea agreement, Kuester used stolen identities to file false tax returns which fraudulently claimed refunds. He would direct the fraudulently obtained refunds to various bank accounts and prepaid debit cards, retaining portions of the proceeds for himself. Kuester also admitted to using an anonymizer to help conceal his filing of the false returns.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the IRS - Criminal Investigation. Trial attorneys Jason H. Poole and Gregory P. Bailey of the United States Department of Justice, Tax Division, are prosecuting the case with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Las Cruces Branch Office.

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

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