



PRESS RELEASE

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FOUR PERSON ID THEFT AND TAX FRAUD CONSPIRACY DISMANTLED

Nearly \$1 Million stolen in Tax Fraud and Unemployment Insurance Fraud Ring

DENVER— The Colorado Attorney General's Office is joined by the Colorado Department of Revenue, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Investigations, Criminal Enforcement Unit and the Colorado Bureau of Investigation in announcing the indictment of an alleged tax fraud and unemployment insurance fraud ring. Zanthia Woodard (A.K.A. Zanthia Finley), with the support of criminal associates Jordan Shead, Sorletta Capri Shead and Janae Cruz are charged with defrauding federal and state agencies of close to \$1,000,000.

The members of the fraud ring, allegedly masterminded by Zanthia Woodard, engaged in an identity theft scheme to steal from both federal and state taxing authorities and from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. The members are believed by prosecutors to have conspired in the filing of over one hundred fifty fraudulent federal and state tax filings using information obtained from victims under the false premise of providing a legitimate tax preparation service. With the appearance of a legitimate tax service in place, the suspects tricked victims into providing tax and personal identification information. Once in the possession of the tax information, enterprise members inflated tax filings with false financial information to maximize earned income tax credits on refunds.

“Identity theft is a serious and pervasive threat to our citizens. My office appreciates the cooperative effort by the various law enforcement agencies involved and we will continue to diligently police and prosecute fraud against the state and anyone who would steal an ID to make a buck” said Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman.

The alleged fraud conspiracy was first identified by the sharp eyes of Department of Revenue Discovery Section staff that stopped attempts to steal nearly \$100,000. However, the members of the enterprise were substantially more successful in defrauding federal taxing authorities of over \$800,000 and certain members of the enterprise then used the above mentioned personal identifying information to commit an alleged \$70,000 in acts of fraud against Wells Fargo Bank and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

The defendants are charged with 34 felony counts and awaiting trial dates in Denver District Court. They face charges that include violating the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act, theft, filing false tax returns, computer crime, identity theft, attempts to influence public servants, and conspiracy to commit the previously mentioned crimes.

In addition to the Colorado Attorney General’s Office, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Labor Criminal Investigation Section and the Colorado Department of Revenue Criminal Tax Enforcement Section in cooperation with agents from the IRS, were all instrumental in the investigation.

The filing of criminal charges or an indictment is merely a formal accusation that an individual committed a crime. Each defendant should be presumed innocent until proven guilty. These cases will be prosecuted in Denver District Court by attorneys with the Criminal Justice Section of the Colorado Attorney General’s Office.

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