



Department of Justice

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ALABAMA WOMAN SENTENCED TO 94 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR STEALING IDENTITIES OF STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS

WASHINGTON – Janika Fernae Bates, a resident of Millbrook, Ala., was sentenced today in the Middle District of Alabama to 94 months in federal prison for stealing identities of student loan borrowers and providing them to a co-conspirator, who used them to file false tax returns, the Justice Department and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced.

On Sept. 23, 2011, a jury in Montgomery, Ala., convicted Bates of identity theft, wire fraud, aggravated identity theft and conspiracy to make false claims for tax refunds.

According to evidence introduced at the five day trial, Bates obtained the names and Social Security numbers of student loan borrowers from the databases at her former employer and conspired to use the stolen identifying information to steal money from the government and from a bank. Several victims testified that they did not consent to the use of their names and Social Security numbers on tax returns and they testified that they did not receive any money from refunds generated from the false documents filed with the IRS. Evidence also revealed that Bates and her co-conspirator, Keshia Brayboy, fraudulently obtained refund anticipation loans from a bank predicated on the fraudulently filed tax returns. Brayboy pleaded guilty in 2009 to filing a false tax return and served two years in federal prison.

U.S. District Judge Myron H. Thompson also ordered Bates to pay \$246,064 in restitution to HSBC Taxpayer Financial Services and \$30,211 in restitution to the IRS.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General John A. DiCicco of the Justice Department's Tax Division commended the IRS Criminal Investigation special agents who investigated this case, Tax Division Trial Attorneys Justin Gelfand and Jason Poole, who are prosecuting the case, and U.S. Attorney George L. Beck Jr. and his entire office for their assistance.

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