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Founder of Fake Prison Charity sentenced for stealing Prisoner Identities, Claiming Millions of Dollars in false Tax Refunds

ATLANTA - Qadir Shabazz, a/k/a Deangelo Moore, a/k/a Deangelo Muhammad, has been sentenced to a prison term of 23 years, one month for running a massive, multi-state fraud scheme in which he operated a fake prison charity that stole thousands of prisoners' identities to apply for millions of dollars in fraudulent income tax refund dollars. Shabazz was found guilty of 33 felony counts following a jury trial in January 2016.

"Shabazz preyed upon prisoners that he promised to help, all in an effort to steal millions from the government," said U. S. Attorney John Horn. "He thought he could go undetected by using the identities of prisoners, who would not notice tax irregularities, with no regard for the false hope he created for them through his bogus charity. Shabazz will now have an opportunity to better understand the situation of the prisoners he victimized."

"Misusing his position of trust at Indigent Inmate, Qadir Shabazz stole the identities of unsuspecting prisoners and filed false tax returns in their names," said Veronica Hyman-Pillot, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation. "Individuals who commit refund fraud and identity theft of this magnitude deserve to be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Today, Mr. Shabazz is held accountable for his criminal actions."

Paul D. Mezzanotte, Acting U.S. Postal Inspector in Charge of the Charlotte Division stated, "This is a great example of a law enforcement partnership that worked together to unravel a sophisticated Identity Theft scheme that stole prisoner's identities for personal financial gain. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service will continue to be vigilant in disrupting criminal organizations who illegally utilize the nation's mail system."

"I commend all of the law enforcement personnel in Pennsylvania and around the country that helped to bring down this well-organized identity theft and tax fraud scam," said Pennsylvania Department of Revenue Secretary Eileen McNulty. "Qadir Shabazz took advantage of prisoners through this multi-state conspiracy and he victimized all of us by stealing tax dollars."

According to U.S. Attorney Horn, the charges and other information presented in court: In 2009, Qadir Shabazz started a fraudulent prison charity called Indigent Inmate. The supposed purpose of Indigent Inmate was to provide religious literature and financial assistance to prisoners serving time in state prisons around the country. Shabazz's employees at Indigent Inmate mailed out thousands of applications for assistance to prisons around the country, and Indigent Inmate received thousands of

completed applications back through the mail. Notably, the applications required the prisoners applying for assistance to provide their name, date of birth, and Social Security Number.

Various inmates testified at trial that they had sent their information to Indigent Inmate because they hoped they would get some type of assistance while they were incarcerated. One prisoner hoped Indigent Inmate would send him stamps so he could write letters to his parents while another hoped he would get religious materials. Once Shabazz was in possession of this identifying information from the prisoners, he and his co-conspirators filed thousands of fraudulent income tax returns in the names of those prisoners between 2010 and 2012. In total, the tax returns requested over \$12,000,000 in fraudulent tax refunds.

Notably, the tax returns would list as the home address of the alleged person filing the tax return, addresses that Shabazz or one of his associates controlled in the Atlanta, Georgia, Chattanooga, Tennessee, or Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania areas. The tax refunds would typically be sent to one of these addresses in the form of prepaid debit cards or checks. For instance, from 2010 through 2012, 668 tax returns in the names of Indigent Inmate applicants were filed listing the home address as the same small house located in the Atlanta area.

Qadir Shabazz, a/k/a Deangelo Moore, a/k/a Deangelo Muhammad, 41, of Atlanta, Georgia, was sentenced by United States District Judge Timothy C. Batten Sr. to serve 23 years, one month in prison, followed by five years of supervised release. Shabazz was ordered to pay \$1,680,299 in restitution to the IRS.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation and United States Postal Inspection Service. The Office of the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Office of Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, Bureau of Criminal Tax Investigations uncovered this scheme and launched a separate state investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys Thomas J. Krepp and Mary L. Webb are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov

Email links icon or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.