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IRS Identity Theft Aide Pleads Guilty To Identity Theft

By **Kat Greene**

Law360, Los Angeles (February 9, 2016, 9:49 PM ET) -- An IRS employee tasked with helping people who'd had their identities stolen pled guilty in Alabama federal court Monday to stealing identities herself as part of a scheme to net more than \$1 million of the government's money with phony tax returns.

Nakeisha Hall, who since 2007 has worked for the IRS' Taxpayer Advocate Service, used her access to taxpayers' information, including Social Security numbers, bank account numbers and other identifying details, to file tax returns on others' behalf, then have the checks sent to addresses set up by a team of co-conspirators, prosecutors said.

Hall pled guilty Monday to theft of government funds, aggravated identity theft, unauthorized access to a protected computer and conspiracy to commit bank fraud and mail fraud affecting a financial institution, court records show. She agreed to hand over \$438,187, the money the IRS actually paid out before the team of thieves was caught, according to U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance.

"Ms. Hall used her IRS access to compromise taxpayers' identities and try to steal more than \$1 million from the U.S. Treasury," Vance said in a statement. "Taxpayers must be able to trust that IRS employees will protect their sensitive information, not steal it and corrupt it for personal gain."

Hall started working for the IRS in 2000, and specifically worked for the advocate service from 2007-2011, according to her guilty plea. Since then, she's worked for the service in Omaha, Nebraska; New Orleans; and Salt Lake City, according to case records.

The advocate service works with people who are having trouble with the IRS, particularly with victims of identity theft, assisting them in removing fake tax information from their accounts and filing corrected returns.

Hall used her access to the information of those taxpayers to create and file phony returns, then collect the checks and debit cards paid out by the IRS, prosecutors said.

She and co-conspirators Jimmie Goodman, Abdulla Coleman, Lashon Roberson and at least one other person concocted the scheme and partially executed it, prosecutors said.

Roberson is scheduled to plead guilty Wednesday, according to Vance. Goodman is scheduled for trial Feb. 29, and Coleman will be arraigned Thursday after being arrested in Madison, Wisconsin, and transferred to Alabama, prosecutors said.

A representative for Hall didn't immediately respond to a request for comment late

Tuesday.

The government is represented by U.S. Attorney Joyce White Vance and Assistant U.S. Attorney Erica Williamson Barnes.

Hall is represented by Dale Jones.

The case is U.S. v. Hall et al., case number 2:15-cr-00314, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

--Editing by Aaron Pelc.

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