



LANSING CHAPTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS



Did you renew your membership this winter? Several folks have not renewed and we suspect a memory-lapse is to blame. Please double check and get your membership renewed. You **MUST** have a current LACFE membership in order to register at the discounted rate for the SAAABA business webinar.

We have 5 openings on the board as of June 30th that need to be filled due to long-term board members stepping down.

Thanks to those who have put their name in for the upcoming election of board members, but we still need a few more. If you or someone who know might be interested, please let us know!

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Fraud Talk Podcast

AI's Double-Edged Sword in Banking: Fighting Fraud While Avoiding Collateral Damage - Kennedy Meda - Fraud Talk - Episode 153

Artificial intelligence is revolutionizing fraud prevention in the banking industry, enhancing detection and risk management. But with these advancements come new challenges—fraudsters using AI to exploit vulnerabilities, biases in algorithms and the need for regulatory adaptation. In this episode, ACFE Content Manager Rihonna Scoggins speaks with fraud expert Kennedy Meda about the impact of AI on banking fraud, the balance between automation and human oversight and how financial institutions can stay ahead of emerging threats.

<https://acfe.podbean.com/e/ai-s-double-edged-sword-in-banking-fighting-fraud-while-avoiding-collateral-damage-kennedy-meda-fraud-talk-episode-153/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

LOCAL:

SAAABA 68th Annual Business Webinar

Virtual

May 6, 2025 (Registration deadline May 5th)

Current LACFE chapter members are eligible to register at

SAAABA member rates. Please indicate your LACFE membership on your SAAABA registration and email Mark Lee at president@lansingacfe.com

Learn more: <https://www.saaaba.org/events3/>



Lansing AGA: Enhancing Financial Audit Readiness Through Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning

Webinar

May 7, 2025 (Registration deadline May 5th)

Learn more: [https://lansing-](https://lansing-aga.org/EventCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?ItemID=171&mid=24&pageid=22)

[aga.org/EventCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?ItemID=171&mid=24&pageid=22](https://lansing-aga.org/EventCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?ItemID=171&mid=24&pageid=22)

Michigan Chamber of Commerce: Chamber Day

Michigan State Capitol - Heritage Hall

100 North Capitol Avenue Lansing, MI 48933

May 7, 2025

Learn more: <https://www.michamber.com/chamberday/>

ACFE Southwest Ohio: AI, Accounting, and Ethics (2 Ethics CPE)

In-person: Fairfield, Ohio, or Virtual

May 9, 2025

Learn more: <https://swohacfe.org/event-5833880>

ACFE South Florida: Real Estate and Condo Forum

Virtual

May 27, 2025

Learn more: <https://acfesouthflorida.org/event-6157485>

NATIONAL:

ACFE 36th Annual Global Fraud Conference

In-Person, Nashville Tennessee, or Virtual

June 22 - June 27, 2025

Learn more: <https://www.fraudconference.com/36th-home.aspx>

** Please let Mark Lee know (president@lansingacfe.org) if you plan to attend either in-person or virtually, as there is a group rate discount if 5 or more LACFE Chapter members attend**

Help me create your newsletter! If you have an event that you would like posted or if you wish to share an article or job opening, please contact Jennifer Ostwald at newsletter@lansingacfe.com

The LACFE is always looking for volunteers to serve on the board, help with events, recommend training topics/speakers, grow our network to alert students to the LACFE scholarship, and more! Let us know if you can help be part of our growth! Email: newsletter@lansingacfe.com

More Than 24 Hours: The Impossible Day Health Care Scheme

April 22, 2025

By Colin May, CFE

<https://www.acfe.com/acfe-insights-blog/blog-detail?s=impossible-day-health-care-fraud-schemes>

David Judd, a Michigan nurse practitioner, billed for an unattainable number of patient visits and hours, leading to significant overpayments from Medicare. Read more about this scheme, known as the "Impossible Day", where health care providers will fraudulently claim they worked more than 24 hours in a single day.

When it comes to health care fraud, sometimes the numbers alone reveal the crime. We know that one person cannot work more than 23.99 hours per day, since there are only 24 hours in a day. But for some fraudsters, this concept has not clicked — and their billing records reveal just how far they have pushed the limits. Experts call it the "Impossible Day" or "High-Day Billing."

Impossible Day Fraud Schemes

Impossible day fraud schemes are defined as occurring when a health care provider purports to provide such a high volume of patient services or procedures in single day (24-hour period) that there is no way the provider could have reasonably performed them. Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) Codes — established by the American Medical Association to ensure consistent billing and data collection — are particularly vulnerable when time is a critical part of the services provided.

Behavioral health CPT codes are especially susceptible to this type of manipulation. David Judd, a Nurse Practitioner (NP) in Clinton Township, Michigan, who practiced mental health treatment was convicted of operating such a scheme. As an NP, Judd had the authority to prescribe medication.

The Background

In September 2012, Judd formed Life Transition Services, Inc. as a "staffing services" company, eventually establishing an office in Clinton Township. Judd's journey to becoming a Nurse Practitioner was a unique one, according to his attorneys. In their Sentencing Memorandum, they detailed his life:

He grew up in a poor neighborhood in humble circumstances where he did have difficulties at home. As a young man, he found himself cutting meat as a profession. Sensing that this was not the career path he ultimately wanted to walk, Mr. Judd used the money he earned in the decade he worked at the meat cutting facility to put himself through community college and eventually graduated with a psychology degree from Oakland University.

From there, he began a career in health care, first as a mental health technician at a hospital, and later working with elderly patients at a second hospital. In 1994, he obtained a degree in nursing and, in 2011, became an NP after completing the NP master's program at Wayne State University.

Judd's Fraud Scheme

Prosecutors, in their overview of the case presented during sentencing, described a different side of Judd, stating that Judd's scheme (which ran from 2015 to 2021) was brazen: "Judd caused the submission of false and fraudulent claims to Medicare for psychotherapy services that were not medically necessary, not rendered and/or not eligible for Medicare reimbursement."

According to a federal search warrant obtained in September 2021, Medicare data showed that Judd — and unlicensed social workers who worked for him — submitted numerous claims that exceeded the 24-hour clock. The analysis revealed that Judd submitted claims for 164 days between 2015 and November 2020, which were determined to be implausible. Medicare paid more than \$525,000 for these submissions.

For example, on May 12, 2018, Judd claimed to have seen 58 patients during that day and billed more than 45 hours in face-time with these patients. Similarly, on November 10, 2018, he saw 52 patients and billed for nearly 40 hours for that day. Judd also submitted claims for patients he allegedly saw when he was actually traveling out of state.

One indicator, aside from the sheer incredibleness of the volume of hours and patients seen on a single day, were the notes in the electronic health records. These proved to be invaluable to the investigators, as they began compiling a pattern of impossible day billing. These reviews found that progress notes for claimed dates of service either did not exist or had been provided by ineligible providers, such as the social workers.

Health record progress notes showed that he had been claiming to see multiple patients during the same blocks of time, another impossibility. Finally, these progress notes also indicated that Judd had only conducted a routine 20-minute medication review and used the CPT 99213 but billed Medicare for an additional 30-minute psychotherapy session using CPT code 90833.

The Outcome

Two days after the raid on his office, Judd was indicted on four counts of health care fraud. Following some procedural motions, Judd ultimately pleaded guilty. In total, Judd submitted or caused to be submitted \$1,248,519.94 in false and fraudulent claims to Medicare, resulting in payments of \$605,701.30 because of Judd's fraudulent acts.

Other Examples of Impossible Day Schemes

Judd is not the only example of impossible day fraud schemes. Insurance companies and government investigators have been very active in this space:

- In 2024, a New Jersey doctor settled False Claims Act (FCA) allegations that included issues of impossible day billing.
- A hospital practice in Michigan settled a FCA investigation in 2023 that its doctors routinely billed over the 24-hour day.
- A Miami, Florida NP was sentenced to 20 years in December 2023 for fraudulently billing Medicare for conducting complex office visits and routinely billed more than 24 hours in a single day.
- A 2016 announcement by a Special Investigations Unit in New Jersey announced monies recovered and losses avoided in more than 900 cases, including some related to the impossible day.

Health care investigators, auditors and leaders need to be attuned to this issue, setting controls to ensure that it cannot happen, or if someone does bill for an unreasonable daily amount, they are identified quickly. The Judd case is just one example of the work needed to detect and hold a provider accountable for the impossible day billing scheme.

Video of the Month

[The Justice for Fraud Victims Project: How Students are Fighting Financial Crime](#)

The Justice for Fraud Victims Project gives students hands-on opportunities to work on real fraud cases, helping victims who can't afford professional forensic accounting services. At SUNY Old Westbury, this initiative has provided students with invaluable experience—leading some to careers with the IRS, FBI and Homeland Security. Learn how this program is shaping the next generation of fraud examiners and why it's expanding across the country. Visit [ACFE.com/Foundation](https://www.acfe.com/Foundation) to learn more about research projects and initiatives funded by the ACFE Research Institute.



Investigating Shrimp Fraud Is an Urgent Matter on the Gulf Coast

April 30, 2025

by Brett Anderson

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/30/dining/shrimp-fraud-gulf-coast-new-orleans.html>

With a flood of imported seafood driving the U.S. shrimp industry to the edge of ruin, a consulting company out of Houston is testing truth in menu labeling.

Imagine sitting down for a meal at a restaurant with a view of the ocean. You are on vacation, and the restaurant's décor includes fishnets, pictures of boats and taxidermied exemplars of the local catch. You order a plate of shrimp, reasonably expecting it to have come from nearby waters.

Way too often it comes from thousands of miles away, Dave Williams told a small crowd at the Louisiana Shrimp Festival on a summer-hot day in New Orleans last fall. "And that's despicable," he said.

Mr. Williams is a commercial fisheries scientist who was in New Orleans to shed light on what he considers an epidemic problem: restaurants and festivals misrepresenting imported shrimp as locally caught. In many cases, diners are paying for what they think is more expensive, high-quality wild Gulf shrimp, but is actually an inferior product produced by an aquaculture industry that has a history of labor abuse. A 2020 study by Louisiana State University found two thirds of imported shrimp samples purchased in Baton Rouge contained banned veterinary drugs.

These farm-raised imports from Asia and South America have flooded the U.S. market, depressing prices. Fishing communities along the Gulf Coast have been decimated and livelihoods destroyed in part because the domestic shrimp industry is being pushed to the edge of extinction.

Mr. Williams founded a company, SEAD Consulting, that developed a genetic test to rapidly identify seafood species. He is using the technology to expose restaurants and festivals misrepresenting their seafood offerings, especially shrimp.

He finds the practice particularly offensive in the Gulf South, the center of a domestic shrimp industry that, as recently as the 1980s, provided 50 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States.

But according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the United States imported more than 90 percent of its shrimp last year, some 1.6 billion pounds. Domestic shrimpers are embracing a recent slate of tariffs enacted by President Trump as a last-ditch chance to reverse the imbalance.

“Restaurants are making additional margin because they’re pretending to sell the Gulf product,” Mr. Williams said. “Shrimpers are not getting their fair share, and customers are not getting what they paid for.”

SEAD developed its peer-reviewed test in collaboration with Prashant Singh, a food safety microbiologist at Florida State University. Dr. Singh said the process was designed to be simple, effective, portable and affordable; the equipment includes a centrifuge and heating device, each roughly the size of a toaster. Mr. Williams described it “as a very sophisticated version of a pregnancy test.”

SEAD’s mission began in earnest when Mr. Williams and his colleagues tested the shrimp served at two Gulf Coast festivals last September and October. Four out of the five vendors tested at the Louisiana Shrimp and Petroleum Festival, held in Morgan City over Labor Day weekend, were serving imported shrimp.

Weeks later, four out of five of the vendors tested at the National Shrimp Festival, in Gulf Shores, Ala., were also found to be serving farm-raised, imported shrimp, despite the festival’s claim to showcase “fresh seafood from the Gulf of Mexico.”

“They’re just truly horrible,” Mr. Williams said during his talk in New Orleans. “But the real problem is restaurants.”

Dana Honn, a New Orleans restaurateur, conceived of last year’s inaugural Louisiana Shrimp Festival to draw attention and aid to the industry after hearing alarming stories about desperate local shrimpers losing their houses and boats. (Vendors at his festival passed SEAD’s authenticity tests “with flying colors,” according to a company release.)

“The industry really needs someone like Dave to stand up for them,” Mr. Honn said. “Even a change of five or 10 percent in the market can make a huge difference.”

In September, the Federal Trade Commission published guidance aimed at restaurants that bend “the rules by using pictures, symbols, or other things to make people believe something about what they are selling without actually saying the words. That’s an implied claim. If it’s not true, it’s just as illegal as an outright lie.”

Alvaro M. Bedoya, who stepped down as F.T.C. commissioner last month, cited that guidance in an October letter sent to the country’s 10 top-grossing seafood restaurants, including Red Lobster, Long John Silver’s and Legal Sea Foods. “I will not hesitate to request a law enforcement investigation if I am presented with credible evidence of a law violation,” Mr. Bedoya wrote.

Mr. Williams, a tough-talking Briton who lives in Houston, conveys a visceral connection to the victims of seafood fraud. He choked up twice recounting the withering away of rural fishing communities, including in his native Devon, England, during his New Orleans talk.

He also stands to gain if government agencies and domestic seafood interests adopt SEAD's genetic testing system to put teeth into the laws. "I can say, 'If you go over 60 miles per hour, I'm going to fine you \$500. If you don't have a speed gun or a radar,'" he said, "there is no enforcement."

SEAD started testing shrimp in randomly selected restaurants across the South late last year, with funding from the Southern Shrimp Alliance, which represents the shrimping industry across eight states.

Only eight of the 44 restaurants tested on the Mississippi Gulf Coast were found to be serving local shrimp. This reporter visited five of the restaurants SEAD's team tested, just before the results were released in early December. All of the restaurants contained decorations that implied local seafood was being served. None of their menus were in full compliance with the F.T.C.'s standards.

Menus at three of the restaurants identified dishes containing Royal Red shrimp, a species found in deep water that generally commands a higher price because of its superior quality. "They're sweeter, a little like lobster," said the server at one of the restaurants, in Gulfport.

The staff at that restaurant and the other two conceded that the "Royal Reds" on their menus were actually a different species from Argentina. The Argentine shrimp are much cheaper, said Jeremy Zirlott, a fifth-generation shrimper based in Bayou Le Batre, Ala., who has been fishing Royal Reds for 20 years.

"Restaurants are paying less for a product but still charging a premium," said Mr. Zirlott, who said he hasn't made a profit on his three fishing boats in three years.

The menus at two of the Mississippi restaurants visited in December had been changed to indicate they were serving Argentine shrimp on return visits in April.

Two staff members at the Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. in Biloxi said on an April visit that the restaurant doesn't serve any domestic seafood beyond a daily crawfish special. The restaurant, which is on the water, based on the movie "Forrest Gump" featuring a Gulf Coast shrimper and decorated with fishing paraphernalia, appeared to violate the standard set by the F.T.C.

In a statement, the company said: "Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. is themed after an iconic movie, and our décor and menus are designed to reflect such. We do not falsely promote the origin of our seafood and operate within FTC regulations."

SEAD followed its Mississippi tests with similar ones across the Southeast, including in Galveston and Kemah, Texas (59 percent fraud rate, according to a company release), Tampa Bay and St. Petersburg, Fla. (96 percent), and Savannah, Ga. (77 percent).

SEAD has focused much of its attention on Louisiana, the country's largest shrimp producer and a state where misleading seafood labeling has historically been an open secret. Its tests there have been funded largely by the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force, which advises state agencies on behalf of diners and the shrimp industry.

A state law passed in 2019 required restaurants to disclose on their menus if they were serving imported shrimp or crawfish. The Louisiana Department of Health recorded 4,461 violations of the law through 2024. But the agency, which is responsible for the law's enforcement, issued no fines. The law didn't include provisions for penalties.

Louisiana's lawmakers passed a law with tougher enforcement measures that went into effect on January 1. The health department has since recorded 415 violations, and issued 136 \$500 fines through April 11.

The Louisiana Restaurant Association instructs restaurants serving imported crawfish or shrimp to inform customers, on its menu or on signs, "Some items served at this establishment may contain imported crawfish or shrimp. Ask for more information." The association does not mention other provisions of the law that require more specific language, including the origin of the crawfish or shrimp.

Mr. Williams accused the restaurant association of attempting to "dilute the power of the law."

"The guidance we provide to our members was issued by the Louisiana Department of Health and remains consistent," a spokeswoman for the L.R.A. wrote in an email. The health department did not respond to The Times's questions about how its inspectors interpreted the labeling law.

Mr. Williams said the comparatively low fraud rates in Baton Rouge (30 percent), New Orleans (13 percent) and Lafayette (33 percent) is evidence that Louisiana's laws, flawed as they've been, are having an effect.

Paige Morrison, director of the U.S. Shrimpers Coalition, said imported shrimp has so affected prices that her husband, Stevie, had to take a job as a pipe fitter after decades as a commercial shrimper in Georgia. She argued that the savings are not being passed onto diners at restaurants, which are charging historically high prices for shrimp cocktails, for instance.

"We don't get any of that money," she said.

Data supplied by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries illustrates the punishing economics. In 2013, 57 million pounds of white shrimp were harvested in Louisiana, valued at more than \$128 million. A comparable amount of white shrimp harvested last year — 52 million pounds — was valued at just \$54 million.

Kindra Arnesen, a Louisiana shrimper, said her family's boats have been docked since taking in just \$7,000 last year. That's compared with the \$350,000 to \$400,000 she said they'd bring in annually 20 years ago.

But she did attribute a recent uptick in prices at the docks, as well as stricter enforcement at Louisiana seafood festivals, in part because of the news stories generated by SEAD's testing.

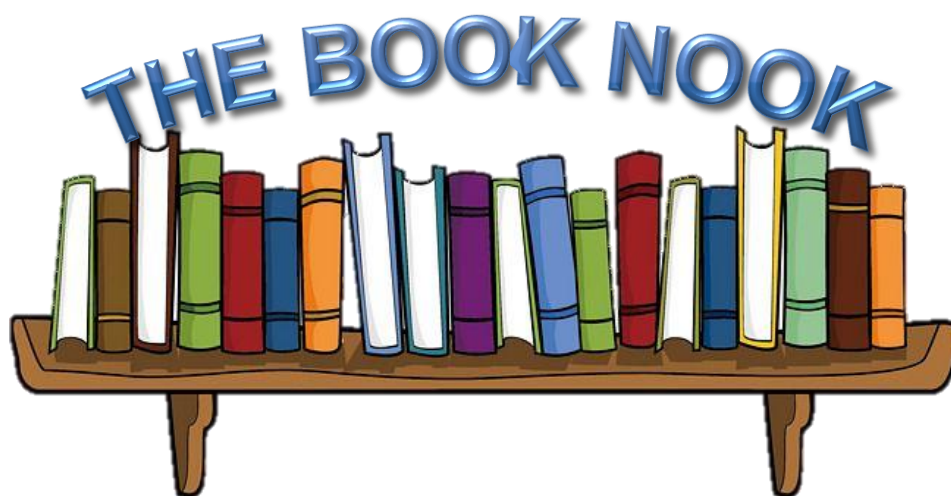
"We are definitely seeing some impacts," said Ms. Arnesen, who hired a captain to take out one of her family's dormant boats, hoping to take advantage of rising prices.

In Texas and Georgia, lawmakers are working to pass seafood labeling laws similar to Louisiana's.

Mr. Williams was in New Orleans again last week. He and three other SEAD colleagues, including Dr. Singh, were testing samples of 19 shrimp dishes served at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in a hotel conference room.

With their most recent restaurant tests, in Wilmington, N.C., producing what has become a predictably discouraging outcome (77 percent fraud rate), the team appeared taken aback by the results.

"Only one dish at Jazz Fest that was inauthentic," Mr. Williams announced. "That's a good result. It's why we do the tests."



The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles That Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People's Lives Better, Too)

by Gretchen Rubin

During her multibook investigation into human nature, Gretchen Rubin realized that by asking the seemingly dry question "How do I respond to expectations?" we gain explosive self-knowledge. She discovered that based on their answer, people fit into Four Tendencies:

- Upholders meet outer and inner expectations readily. "Discipline is my freedom."
- Questioners meet inner expectations, but meet outer expectations only if they make sense. "If you convince me why, I'll comply."
- Obligers (the largest Tendency) meet outer expectations, but struggle to meet inner expectations—therefore, they need outer accountability to meet inner expectations. "You can count on me, and I'm counting on you to count on me."
- Rebels (the smallest group) resist all expectations, outer and inner alike. They do what they choose to do, when they choose to do it, and typically they don't tell themselves what to do. "You can't make me, and neither can I."

Our Tendency shapes every aspect of our behavior, so using this framework allows us to make better decisions, meet deadlines, suffer less stress, and engage more effectively. It's far easier to succeed when you know what works for you.

Justice Department Continues Efforts to Stop Unlawful Tax Return Preparers

April 15, 2025

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-continues-efforts-stop-unlawful-tax-return-preparers>

Taxpayers Must Remain Vigilant Against Dishonest Tax Preparers

Today, the federal tax filing deadline, the Justice Department's Tax Division acknowledges the majority of taxpayers and tax return preparers who voluntarily meet their yearly filing obligations. The Tax Division also cautions taxpayers to choose their return preparers carefully and to look out for unscrupulous preparers who make promises of tax reductions not based on legitimate positions and who include errors or false information on tax returns that could leave a taxpayer subject to liability for unpaid taxes, penalties, and interest.

Over the last year, the Tax Division has worked with U.S. Attorneys' Offices around the country to bring civil and criminal actions against dishonest tax preparers. These actions include criminal indictments and prison sentences when appropriate as well as civil injunctions to stop ongoing fraud, civil penalties, and disgorgement of ill-gotten proceeds when appropriate. The Justice Department's message has been clear: those who prepare fraudulent returns will face serious and lasting consequences.

Examples of civil injunctions obtained by the Tax Division over the last and current filing seasons include:

- On Oct. 28, 2024, a federal district court in the Southern District of Indiana permanently enjoined Juan Santiago and his tax preparation business, Madison Solutions LLC, from preparing tax returns for others or employing any person acting as a federal tax return preparer. The government's complaint alleged that Santiago and his business engaged in fraudulent filing schemes by improperly claiming Head of Household filing status, the Child Tax Credit, and business deductions to which their clients were not entitled. The government estimated that these false returns cost the government over \$1 million each filing season.
- On Oct. 3, 2024, a federal district court in the Southern District of Florida entered a permanent injunction against George and Luis Brito and their business, Brito and Brito Accounting USA Inc. The injunction prohibits them from preparing tax returns for others. The government's complaint alleged that since 2019, the Britos had prepared thousands of tax returns annually, and that they prepared returns that understated their clients' income by claiming false or inflated business expenses and fabricating residential energy credits.

- On March 29, 2024, following a 12-day trial, a federal district court in the Eastern District of Michigan permanently enjoined Annetta Powell and seven of her businesses from preparing tax returns for others. The court found that Powell and her businesses prepared returns that reported fake Schedule C businesses and business expenses, claimed household help income they knew the customers did not qualify for, and claimed head of household filing status without doing the required due diligence. The court also ordered Powell to disgorge \$697,797 in ill-gotten profits.

The Tax Division has also sought to strip fraudulent preparers of ill-gotten gains and to hold in contempt those who attempt to flout court-ordered restraints on further fraudulent activity. Over the last year, the division has brought these cases to court, including:

- On Oct. 24, 2024, a federal district court in the Northern District of Texas held that Jennifer Murley violated a previous injunction against returning tax returns for others. The IRS had suspended Murley's Electronic Filing Identification Number (EFIN), but she and her tax preparation firm misappropriated EFINs assigned to others. The court ordered Murley to disgorge over \$700,000 in ill-gotten gains she received for preparing returns in violation of the previous court order.
- On Oct. 23, 2024, a federal district court in the Southern District of Florida found Gerald Vito and James Eleby in contempt for violating a previous injunction from 2021 that enjoined them from preparing tax returns for others. Vito and Eleby worked with Kwame Thomas to continue to file returns after being barred from doing so, and the court ordered them to disgorge a total of \$988,789.56 in ill-gotten and to notify their clients of the injunction or face possible incarceration.

Criminal indictments and convictions against fraudulent preparers obtained by the Tax Division since the 2024 filing season include the following :

- Thierry Musese, who ran a return preparation business from his barbershop located in Auburn, Maine, was charged with preparing false returns and generating fraudulent refunds for clients by including bogus business losses, fuel and residential energy credits. Musese also allegedly defrauded his clients by diverting a portion of their tax refund to himself without their permission. If convicted Musese faces a maximum penalty of three years in prison for each count of preparing a false tax return and a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for wire fraud.
- John Borgela, a Florida return preparer, was sentenced to 30 months in prison for conspiring to file hundreds of false tax returns for clients from his business, Empire Tax services. Borgela typically inflated tax withholdings and reported fictitious itemized deductions to reduce his clients' tax liability or to generate refunds. He concealed his involvement in the fraud by not including his name as the person who prepared the return on his clients' tax returns.
- Vervia Watts, a return preparer in Illinois, was sentenced to one year and a day in prison for preparing and filing false returns for clients. Watts prepared over 900 fraudulent income tax returns for her clients, reporting false education expenses and business income to obtain larger refunds from the IRS. She caused a tax loss to the United States of approximately \$1.3 million.

- On April 17, 2024, Jonathan Barefoot, a Mississippi return preparer, was sentenced to 30 months in prison for preparing false tax returns for clients. Barefoot conspired with others to claim inflated tax refunds for clients by reporting false education credits, itemized deductions, and business losses. He and his co-conspirators caused a loss to the United States of approximately \$3.5 million.

The Tax Division reminds taxpayers that the IRS has information, tips, and reminders on its site for choosing a tax preparer carefully (Choosing a Tax Professional and How to Choose a Tax Return Preparer) and has launched a free directory of credentialed federal tax preparers. The IRS also offers taxpayers tips to protect their identities and wallets when filing their taxes.

In addition, IRS Free File, a public-private partnership, offers free online tax preparation and filing options on IRS partner websites for individuals whose adjusted gross income is under \$79,000. For individuals whose income is over that threshold, IRS Free File offers electronic federal tax forms that can be filled out and filed online for free. The IRS has tips on how seniors and individuals with low to moderate income can get other help or guidance on tax return preparation, too.

In the past decade, the Tax Division has obtained civil injunctions and criminal convictions against hundreds of unscrupulous tax preparers. Information about these cases is available on the Justice Department's website. An alphabetical listing of persons enjoined from preparing returns and promoting tax schemes can be found on this page. If you believe that one of the enjoined persons or businesses may be violating an injunction, please contact the Tax Division with details.

Quote of the Month

“The difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is the thickness of a prison wall.”

— Denis Healey, a British Labour Party politician who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1974 to 1979 and as Secretary of State for Defense from 1964 to 1970; he remains the longest-serving Defense Secretary to date.