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Last of Staten Sisters Receives 18 Year Sentence for Tax Fraud Ring

Staten Sisters Received 90 Felony Charges in 2015 for Filing Fraudulent Tax Information, Identity Theft

Tawanda Staten of Milwaukee received an 18 year sentence from Judge Jeffrey Wagner for her part in a tax fraud and identity theft scheme that involved her two sisters as well as two accomplices, James Cross and Anthony Coleman. Tawanda received a total sentence of 18 years – she will have to serve 10 years prison time, and an additional 8 years of extended supervision. She was also ordered to jointly repay \$202,520 in restitution to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

Tawanda and her two sisters, Angela and Sharon, were charged with a total of 90 felony charges in February 2015 for filing fraudulent income tax returns following a two year investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's (DOR) Office of Criminal Investigation with assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Department of Criminal Investigation.

Angela Staten received a total sentence of 28 years – she will have to serve 14 years prison time, and an additional 14 years extended supervision. Sharon Staten received a total sentence of 20 years – she will have to serve 10 years prison time, and an additional 10 years extended supervision.

The three sisters were prosecuted by the Milwaukee County District Attorney's office for being part of a scheme where 2,000 fraudulent tax claims were filed between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2012. The scheme attempted to get a total of \$960,175 in tax refunds, but the agency blocked \$725,785 in fake claims, or more than three quarters of the fake returns, by following the patterns that the Staten sisters and their accomplices used when filing.

DOR's Criminal Investigation agents referred the case to the Milwaukee County DA's office in April 2014 following an in-depth investigation that gathered evidence against the Staten sisters. This includes evidence that was gained when search warrants were executed against all three on May 31, 2012, which turned up documents, computer files, fingerprints and other evidence that listed hundreds of stolen identities with names, dates of birth, and social security numbers.

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