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For Immediate Release

August 24, 2023

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Whitewater Tax Preparer Charged with Tax Crimes Filed 340 False Returns

Mauricio Castaneda, a Whitewater tax preparer, was charged with theft, five counts of filing false Wisconsin income tax returns and five counts of filing false claims for credit. Castaneda was charged in Walworth County on August 21, 2023.

According to the [criminal complaint](#), Castaneda allegedly filed returns for customers at El Nevado Taxes in Whitewater, Wisconsin. Some customers filed under Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) which are issued and used by individuals who are required to have a tax identification number but do not have a Social Security number. Customers received refunds for Wisconsin income taxes withheld. Later, Castaneda allegedly filed fraudulent returns that used different identification numbers, but the customers' same W-2 wage statements that were previously used to receive refunds. Castaneda also allegedly added fictitious spouses and claimed credits to increase the tax refunds. Castaneda received the refund checks in the mail and deposited them into his bank account. Castaneda allegedly filed 340 false returns attempting to defraud the state of Wisconsin of approximately \$331,656.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue prevented refunds from being issued for 307 fraudulent returns. However, Castaneda received refunds on 33 returns, for a loss of \$33,356.

If convicted on all counts, Castaneda may be imprisoned up to 70 years, face fines up to \$125,000, or both, and assessed the cost of prosecution. An assistant attorney general from the Criminal Litigation Unit in the Wisconsin Department of Justice is prosecuting the case following an investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue Office of Criminal Investigation.

Castaneda is presumed innocent. An initial appearance is scheduled in Walworth County Circuit Court for September 19, 2023, at 1:15pm.

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue Office of Criminal Investigation investigates individuals and businesses suspected of committing tax crimes and seeks criminal prosecution for those crimes.

To report tax fraud, go to www.revenue.wi.gov and click the "Report tax fraud" link under Quick Links.

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