

San Jose woman convicted in tax fraud scheme exploiting the homeless

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SAN JOSE — The second defendant in a scheme to exploit homeless people and obtain millions of dollars in ill-gotten tax refunds pleaded guilty this week, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Prosecutors say Nancy Vo, 74, of San Jose, conspired with John Nguyen and Nam Thi Nguyen to use the personal information of others to file fraudulent claims with the Internal Revenue Service.

Between May 2012 and December 2013, Vo and her co-conspirators found people who had not worked or filed a tax return in previous years and told them that they could file one in order to get stimulus money from the government, according to court documents.

Vo also went to homeless shelters and encampments in the San Jose area and asked people to supply their personal information and sign blank tax forms, which she then turned over to John Nguyen to complete with bogus information, according to court documents.

To avoid arousing suspicion by having too many tax returns come from the same mailing address, Vo and her co-conspirators rented more than a dozen private mail boxes at several locations on or near Senter Road in San Jose, according to court documents.

Vo helped file at least 1,743 fraudulent tax returns claiming more than \$3.5 million in refunds, according to court documents.

In May, a federal grand jury indicted Vo on one count of conspiracy to file false claims, three counts of aiding and abetting in filing false claims, two counts of mail fraud and two counts of aggravated identity theft. She pleaded guilty to all counts late Monday.

Vo is slated to return to U.S. District Court in San Jose for sentencing July 25. She faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for each count of conspiring to file false claims and submitting false claims, 20 years for each count of mail fraud and a mandatory minimum sentence of two years in prison for aggravated identity theft.

John Nguyen previously pleaded guilty to conspiring to submitting and conspiring to submit fraudulent claims.

Staff writer Robert Salonga contributed to this report.