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**HARTFORD LETTER CARRIER SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR IN  
PRISON FOR ROLE IN FEDERAL TAX REFUND CHECK THEFT RING**

David B. Fein, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that MANUEL QUILES, 41, of Hartford, was sentenced today by Senior United States District Judge Warren W. Eginton in Bridgeport to 12 months and one day imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, for embezzlement of mail by an employee of the United States Postal Service. As part of the sentence, Judge Eginton ordered QUILES to pay restitution in the amount of \$70,000 to the United States Treasury.

According to court documents and statements made in court, beginning in January 2010, QUILES, a letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service, participated in a scheme to steal tax refund checks issued by the United States Treasury. As part of the scheme, QUILES provided other scheme participants with a list of addresses located on his mail carrier route in Hartford. The scheme participants then fraudulently caused the U.S. Treasury to issue and mail tax refund checks to the addresses identified by QUILES. Instead of delivering the tax refund checks to the addresses that he had previously identified, QUILES took possession of the checks and delivered them to other scheme participants. QUILES was paid \$300 for each check he took and provided to others. On March 7, 2011, QUILES possessed 11 envelopes containing federal tax refund checks that he stole from the U.S. mail.

On June 1, 2011, QUILES waived his right to indictment and pleaded guilty to one count of receipt of stolen mail. As part of his plea agreement, QUILES acknowledged that the U.S. Treasury has suffered losses of between \$70,000 and \$120,000 as a result of his involvement in the scheme.

The investigation has also led to the conviction of JOSUE MERCADO, a.k.a., "Ariel," who was sentenced in September 2011 for his role as a courier between QUILES and other scheme participants.

This investigation is being conducted by the United States Postal Service, Office of the Inspector General; the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Internal Revenue Service

– Criminal Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christopher M. Mattei.

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