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to filing \$22 million in false refund claims with the federal government.

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An income tax preparer in the Miami, Florida suburb of Plantation has pleaded guilty to filing \$22 million in false refund claims with the federal government.

Freddie Howard admitted that as a result of the fraudulent claims, the Internal Revenue Service sent refunds totaling \$4.5 million to his clients from 2011 to 2013.

Howard, 56, said he hid his role by not including his tax preparer information on the paper returns, which were sent by mail to the IRS. He used his clients, who sought refunds ranging from \$60,000 to \$1.4 million, to contact the IRS about the status of their returns. Howard was paid a commission on each successful refund claim, prosecutor Michael Berger said.

Howard, who was previously convicted of tax violations in 2004, pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud. U.S. District Judge Robin Rosenbaum scheduled his sentencing for Aug. 29 in Fort Lauderdale federal court.

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