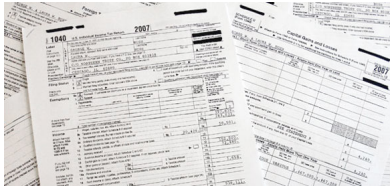


Judge believes local tax collector signed fraudulent tax returns

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By EARL WATT

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During a divorce hearing in 2013, Judge Clint Peterson said “This court really feels it’s been somewhat the victim of fraud here today.”

Peterson’s statement came during testimony from Brenda Rogers and Chris Rogers dealing with spousal support.

The statements were transcribed by Melody Hofferber, the official court reporter for the 26th Judicial District, in a transcript obtained by the Leader & Times.

Brenda Rogers, an employee for the State of Kansas as a tax collector, told the court that her estranged husband’s income was \$100,000 per year, but tax returns for 2009, 2010 and 2011 indicated he had little to no wages in operating his businesses, including a bail bonding company and Goldielocks Gun and Pawn.

Greg Swanson, an attorney for Chris Rogers, asked Brenda Rogers about the figure and if it was true.

“If you reported all of his income, yes it could be true,” she said.

Swanson then asked, “And you signed these tax returns for the last three years showing that he has no wages; correct?”

“That is correct,” she replied.

“And showing a profit and loss of his business; correct?” Swanson asked.

Again, Brenda Rogers answered, “Correct.”

Swanson asked again, “And you signed these tax returns; correct?”

“Correct,” Brenda Rogers again replied.

“And you and Erica (O’Neil) prepared them, correct?” Swanson asked.

“Correct,” Brenda Rogers said.

Judge Peterson stated that he believed the IRS could have a problem with these tax returns.

“I look at these tax returns, and I hear the evidence about the income of these parties, and if one was to look at the lifestyles of these parties, as the IRS can do, I would tend to think these tax returns are fraudulent and do not accurately reflect the income of these parties as reflected by your lifestyles,” Peterson said.

According to Kansas Department of Revenue representative Jeannine Koranda, when a spouse signs tax returns that they know to be false, they are committing tax fraud.

“They both committed tax fraud,” Koranda said.

She also stated that Brenda Rogers’ status as a state employee did not exempt her from following the law.

“Everybody follows the same exact laws,” Koranda said. “State employees are not exempt from tax laws.”

Since the issue involved personnel, Koranda said she could not comment on any action that would or would not be taken, but that the information would be passed on to state investigators.

“All of our fraud investigations we take seriously,” she said. “They are investigated thoroughly.”

Chris Rogers died Sept. 9, 2013. Brenda Rogers remains employed by the Kansas Department of Revenue as a tax enforcement officer.