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At IRS, What Happens In Vegas Doesn't Stay In Vegas

Here's some press the IRS could use. An IRS Revenue Agent in Sin City is reportedly *too soft* on collections. In fact, the IRS and prosecutors are claiming that he is *so easy* on taxpayers, he's closing out cases and leaving money on the table. Wait, there's more.



The Las Vegas IRS Agent is *so lenient* the government claims it's a crime. See [Las Vegas IRS revenue officer says he was unfairly targeted](#). Maybe this fellow needs to transfer to Cincinnati to work on some Tea Party exemption applications. Hey, it sounds at least as good as a Star Trek video.

The IRS employee in the middle of the Vegas Strip is Revenue Officer Anthony M. Zecchino. He has filed a lawsuit claiming that the IRS targeted him in a criminal investigation. See [Amended Complaint](#). It's bogus, he claims, and was done in retaliation for employment discrimination claims he filed earlier this year.

The suit says Mr. Zecchino received a target letter from Assistant U.S. Attorney Kathryn Newman after his lawyers filed a discrimination

complaint. See [Target Letter](#). A target letter would be upsetting to anyone. This one did not accuse Agent Zecchino of personally benefiting from his kinder and gentler collecting, though it does suggest some taxpayers got way too good a deal.

In fact, it claims Agent Zecchino might have violated two federal criminal statutes. Let's see, there's unlawful acts by revenue officers and theft of government funds. The feds suggest he ran afoul of these rules by "improperly and fraudulently" closing collection cases despite identifiable assets that were there for the taking.

With all the current scandals, doesn't that sound pretty tame? Still, Zecchino's lawyers said the target letter is an attempt to intimidate him into abandoning his discrimination claims against the IRS. Here's the back-story. Agent Zecchino claims his supervisors made derogatory remarks about his Italian heritage, including "all Italians dress like pimps."

One superior allegedly remarked that Agent Zecchino collected taxes "like the Godfather and the Sopranos." When Zecchino complained, the supervisor's boss ignored the allegations. Zecchino says that's when things got ugly, triggering a "deranged and retaliatory" campaign against him. It led to a demotion, the denial of 240 hours of sick leave and being targeted in the criminal investigation.

Of course, Zecchino still works for the IRS, though it's likely a tense office. Zecchino's suit says he has been relegated to manning a reception kiosk at the IRS and denied an opportunity to transfer outside Nevada. (Are there really IRS kiosks in Las Vegas?)

What do taxpayers think of all this? Agent Zecchino states in his suit that he has been "recognized by taxpayers for his sense of compassion, fairness and pleasant personality." If that's true, it probably means the public would rather have him out there cutting deals than sitting in an IRS kiosk.

You can reach me at Wood@WoodLLP.com. This discussion is not intended as legal advice, and cannot be relied upon for any purpose without the services of a qualified professional.