

# Unscrupulous Tax-'Professionals' and Taxpayers Who Trust Them

## Unscrupulous Tax-'Professionals' and Taxpayers Who Trust Them

There have been a recent (past few years) slew of cases dealing with various unscrupulous tax preparers, tax advisers, and sham organizations that prey on the greed and need of individuals, and who exploit the general population's lack of financial literacy and the bewildering complexity of our tax laws. The taxpayers are generally left holding the bag - facing life-destroying assessments. The confidence men and women, on the other hand, generally live to con another day.

Two recent cases are those of

*Bhatti v The Queen*, [2013 TCC 143](#)

and

*Janowsky v The Queen*, [2013 TCC 140](#)

I will not repeat the stories here. They are all too common and all too familiar. What I will repeat is a call for a combination of (1) public education about tax law (law generally) - shouldn't everyone know the rules of the game society plays by?; (2) crackdown - CRA with new powers, RCMP, or a new agency - on financial and tax fraudsters; and (3) a simplification of our tax system with an eye to increased fairness (not simplification for simplicity's sake).

I will also call on the Media to take a role and fulfill at least part of the obligations that societies expect of the Media in exchange for the freedoms guaranteed to them in a liberal democracy. This role can and should be educational - both in identifying the fraudulent schemes (eg Natural Person arguments) and educating the public as to their tax/legal obligations and rights. I know that I am not the only one that is troubled by the increasing 'entertainment, debauchery, fear, outrage, fancy, and idolatry' that fills most of the 'news' time and spaces in society.