



# TRS Newspaper

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## Average Joes As Likely to Face Tax Trouble

**You read in newspapers about big-name celebrities caught violating U.S. tax law. But beware: You're at risk too.**

Celebrity lands in tax trouble.

That story always finds a way into your newspaper or your favorite news website.

After all, who hasn't read about Brazilian race-car driver and *Dancing with the Stars* winner Helio Castroneves?

The 33-year-old faces trial in Miami on charges he failed to report \$5.5 million in income from 1999 to 2004.

That's news — a good topic for the water cooler.

But celebrities such as Castroneves are simply individuals among the thousands of people who land in trouble with the IRS every year.

You read about folks like Castroneves, but it's important to remember there thousands of folks just like you who face life-changing charges because they decided to cheat a little on their taxes.

Average people are having tax troubles and facing even prison time time, nationwide.

For example:

- Las Vegas attorney Mark A. Lobello will spend the next 15 months in a federal prison for trying to avoid paying \$140,000 in income taxes.
- Thomas Rikki Farr, 66, of Scottsdale, Ariz., was a businessman whose clients were in Hong Kong. He has three months on Lobello, after having been sentenced to 18 months in prison after evading hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes.
- Thomas B. Parker, 64, and his wife Margaret A. Parker, 65, of Vidor, Texas, could spend three of their next retirement years behind bars. A jury

found them guilty of evading more than \$100,000 in taxes.

You read all about Castroneves. But you didn't read about these people, did you?

And don't be fooled: It's not just the people who evade six figures or more who get caught.

The small-timers are also facing prosecution. Every year, hundreds of middle class people across the country are indicted for filing a false tax return.

Now that we're in 2009, the IRS's aggressive enforcement policies are unlikely to change. In fact, they are likely to become more aggressive.

Take, for example, what IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman said of enforcement during a recent speech.

"Think of a detective working a case who may employ everything from eyewitness accounts, physical evidence, paper trails and the cooperation of law enforcement officials in other states," Shulman said. "That's similar to what we're doing with the following tools (of enforcement)."

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