My Dear Tax Clients,

It is with a heavy heart that I bring you this news. On Friday December 19, 2014, my vehicle was broken into. My briefcase, laptop (password protected) and a flash drive containing confidential client information was stolen. The car was locked and parked on a well-lit commercial area in front of a busy restaurant.

I am horrified that this has happened and I am 110% committed to providing you with my fullest measure of support in dealing with the consequences of this event. I am required to inform you, under California Civil Code s.1798.29(a) and s.1798.82(a), that there has been a potential data security breach in which unencrypted personal information was acquired, or reasonably believed to have been acquired, by an unauthorized person(s). In addition, under California Civil Code s.1798.29(e) and s.1798.82(f), I am required to issue a security breach notification to the California Attorney General.

The laptop, which, I repeat, is password protected, contains confidential information such as tax returns for current and previous years, as well as copies of supporting documents associated with those returns. This includes names, addresses, birth dates, and social security numbers for clients, spouses, and dependents.

The flash drive had only been in use for a couple of weeks and contained some unencrypted data for a small number of clients. I will be notifying those clients who were identified on the flash drive via an additional email message. Also stolen was my message log and to-do list containing several names and telephone numbers.

This incident was not the sole occurrence as there was another vehicle several yards away that was also broken into. This leads law officers to believe that the offender(s) were not specifically targeting my vehicle. We have little reason to believe that they are after any sensitive data. They were most likely primarily interested in the physical value of the contents taken. Rarely is data ever retrieved from a stolen laptop – the vast majority end up with the hard drive being wiped and restored to factory settings, then sold in a pawn shop.

The incident has been reported to the San Francisco Police Department. The incident number is 146271127.

Though this was not likely a premeditated incident to steal personal data, my staff and I are taking any and all necessary measures to ensure your personal data is always safe and secure with us. From this point forward, we are installing laptop theft recovery software on all business laptops and encrypting flash drives to help ensure the safety of your confidential information.

Furthermore, in the event that it becomes necessary, I will reimburse affected clients for the cost of credit monitoring services, the duration of which will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Please call me ASAP if you can think of anything else I can do to reduce your discomfort.

Please also take a moment to assess the link below on what you can do to protect yourself in a security breach.
https://www.privacyrights.org/how-to-deal-security-breach

To learn more, you can go to the FTC Website at www.consumer.gov/idtheft or call the FTC, at (877) IDTHEFT (438-4338) or write to Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Response Center, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580.

I recommend that you closely monitor your credit file activity and financial accounts, change your passwords, and consider requesting a fraud alert with one of the major credit reporting agencies. Please notify me at once if there is any evidence of an irregularity so that I may assist you in taking corrective action and can notify other clients of this breach.

I am so sorry this happened and for any inconvenience this may cause you and your loved ones. In 40 years of service, I have never been confronted with such an occurrence as this.

I remain committed to providing you the best service possible for all your tax and accounting needs.

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