



PRESS RELEASE

## Former Homeland Security Investigations Special Agent Convicted of Federal Tax, Structuring, and Concealment Offenses

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### For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Illinois

CHICAGO — A federal jury in Chicago today convicted a former special agent with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) – a criminal investigative unit within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – on tax, structuring, and concealment offenses.

ANTHONY SABAINI, 41, of Naperville, Ill., was convicted on all counts against him: one count of structuring, one count of willfully engaging in a scheme to conceal a material fact in a matter within the jurisdiction of DHS, and five counts of willfully filing a false federal tax return. The jury returned its verdicts this afternoon after a three-week trial in U.S. District Court in Chicago. A sentencing date was not immediately set.

Sabaini was assigned to HSI's field office in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. Evidence at trial showed that Sabaini maintained a corrupt relationship with an HSI confidential informant ("CI"). Sabaini tipped off the CI to sensitive law enforcement investigations and protected the CI from other federal law enforcement investigations conducted by the FBI and DEA. In exchange for Sabaini's protection, the CI paid Sabaini at least approximately \$50,000. The evidence showed that Sabaini stole money from HSI that was earmarked for investigative activity. He also stole cash from drug dealers.

Evidence at trial revealed that Sabaini deposited more than \$250,000 in cash into a bank account for which he was the sole signatory. He made the deposits through more than 162 transactions, with the amount of each deposit being less than \$10,000. The deposits were structured in an effort to evade federal reporting rules, which require financial institutions to notify the U.S. Department of the Treasury about transactions of more than \$10,000.

The evidence also showed that Sabaini lied in official HSI memoranda in 2017 and 2018 to protect his corrupt relationship with the CI. In the memoranda, Sabaini knowingly covered up material facts, including that the CI was a target of ongoing criminal investigations conducted by other law enforcement agencies, and that the CI had recently engaged in unauthorized criminal conduct that Sabaini knew would have affected his suitability as a paid HSI informant.

The tax convictions pertained to Sabaini willfully filing false federal tax returns that underreported his total income.

A separate federal jury in 2021 convicted Sabaini's partner, FERNANDO ZAMBRANO, of lying to investigators during the Sabaini probe. Zambrano was a Palos Heights Police Officer assigned to an HSI task force. Zambrano was sentenced to three months in federal prison.

The convictions of Sabaini were announced by Morris Pasqual, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert W. “Wes” Wheeler, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI; Justin Campbell, Special Agent-in-Charge of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division in Chicago; and Karen Whalen, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General’s Chicago Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the DEA and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Office of Professional Responsibility. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jared Hasten and Jonathan Shih.

The structuring and concealment charges are each punishable by up to five years in federal prison. Each tax charge is punishable by up to three years.