

# Former HSI Special Agent Sentenced to More Than Six Years in Prison on Tax, Structuring, and Concealment Charges

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**For Immediate Release**

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

CHICAGO — A former special agent with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) has been sentenced to more than six years in federal prison for tax, structuring, and concealment offenses.

A jury in May convicted ANTHONY SABAINI, 41, of Naperville, Ill., of illegally structuring financial transactions, concealing material facts from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and filing false federal tax returns. In addition to the 74-month prison sentence, U.S. District Judge Andrea R. Wood on Thursday ordered Sabaini to pay \$93,422 in restitution to the IRS.

The sentence was 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, Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General for DHS, and Michael K. Finerty, Resident Agent-in-Charge of the Office of Professional Responsibility at DHS. Valuable assistance was provided by the DEA.

"Corrupt law enforcement strikes at the heart of our system of government," Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jared Hasten and Jonathan Shih argued in the prosecution's sentencing memorandum. "When individuals in law enforcement break the law, it makes the job of legitimate law enforcement that much harder because it erodes public trust."

Sabaini was assigned to the Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. field office of HSI, a criminal investigative unit within DHS. Evidence at trial revealed that Sabaini maintained a corrupt relationship with an HSI confidential informant and tipped off the informant to sensitive investigations conducted by other law enforcement agencies, including the FBI and DEA. In exchange for Sabaini's protection, the informant paid Sabaini at least \$50,000. Sabaini also stole cash from drug dealers and pocketed money from HSI that had been earmarked for investigative activity.

Sabaini deposited more than \$250,000 into a bank account for which he was the sole signatory. He made the deposits in more than 160 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 on official HSI memoranda in 2017 and 2018 to protect his corrupt relationship with the informant. In the memoranda, Sabaini knowingly concealed material facts, including that the informant was a target of ongoing criminal investigations conducted by other law enforcement agencies, and that the informant had recently engaged in unauthorized criminal conduct that Sabaini knew would have affected his suitability as a paid HSI informant.

Sabaini also underreported income in federal tax returns from 2014 to 2018.

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.

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