



Department of Justice

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Northern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FORMER FBI SECURITY SPECIALIST PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS TO A GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Pittsburg Woman Had Top Secret/SCI Clearance, Oversaw FBI Background Investigations

SAN JOSE, Calif. – A Former FBI employee pleaded guilty in federal court in San Jose this morning to making False Statements to a Government Agency, United States Attorney Melinda L. Haag announced.

Rachelle Thomas-Zuill admitted in her plea agreement that from February 1997 to July 2010, she worked as an employee of the San Francisco Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). From 2003 to 2010, Thomas-Zuill was an FBI Personnel Security Specialist, where her professional responsibilities included overseeing and administering background investigations for the determination of security clearances for FBI personnel (including FBI management and special agents). Thomas-Zuill also collected financial information from other FBI personnel for use in their background investigations. Thomas-Zuill had Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) clearance. As an FBI employee with Top Secret/SCI clearance as well as access to sensitive information, Thomas-Zuill was required annually to file a security financial disclosure form (SFDF) disclosing certain financial information (including listing her assets and liabilities). Thomas-Zuill knew that her supervisors and the Security Division/Internal Security Section of the FBI would review her financial information on her SFDF to assess whether she

had personal financial problems which might threaten her continued suitability for Top Secret/SCI security clearance.

Thomas-Zuill admitted in the plea agreement that on Nov. 30, 2007, she knowingly submitted an SFDF that contained several false statements regarding her financial situation. Thomas-Zuill claimed in that SFDF that she personally owned three properties with a total outstanding mortgage debt of \$866,000 when she knew that she actually owned six properties with outstanding mortgage debt of \$2,276,000. Thomas-Zuill admitted that she made this false statement to conceal from her supervisors and the Security Division/Internal Security Section of the FBI that she was financially overextended. Thomas-Zuill subsequently failed to keep up with the payment of her mortgages and by August 2008 all but one of her six properties went into foreclosure. Thomas-Zuill also admitted to making other false statements in her Nov. 30, 2007 SFDF regarding her financial situation, as well as also filing false SFDFs in 2008 and 2009.

Thomas-Zuill, 39, of Pittsburg, Calif., was charged in a Criminal Information on Dec. 2, 2010, with one count of making false statements to a government agency, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(3).

The sentencing of Thomas-Zuill is scheduled for April 7, 2011, before United States District Judge Court Jeremy Fogel in San Jose. The maximum statutory penalty is five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 plus restitution if appropriate. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Joseph Fazioli is the Assistant U.S. Attorney who is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Kamille Singh. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the United States Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General.

Further Information:

Case #: CR-10-0883 JF

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

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