



Department of Justice

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District of Oregon

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FBI SPECIAL AGENT INDICTED FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS AND OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

PORTLAND, Ore. – A federal grand jury in Portland has charged W. Joseph Astarita, a member of the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) based in Quantico, Va., with three counts of making false statements and two counts of obstruction of justice. Astarita was one of a number of FBI agents assigned to the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and was present during the shooting of Robert LaVoy Finicum on January 26, 2016, in Harney County, Oregon.

The indictment alleges that Astarita knowingly and willfully made false statements to FBI Supervisory Special Agents, knowing that the statements were false and material to the FBI's decision not to investigate the propriety of an agent-involved shooting. Specifically, Astarita falsely stated he had not fired his weapon during the attempted arrest of Mr. Finicum when he knew he had in fact fired his weapon. Astarita also knowingly engaged in misleading conduct toward Oregon State Police officers by failing to disclose that he had fired two rounds during the attempted arrest.

Astarita was arraigned on June 28, 2017, in Portland. He entered pleas of not guilty to each county and was released pending future appearances.

An indictment is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case was investigated by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General in partnership with the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

A copy of the federal indictment is available via the following link:

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-or/pr/fbi-special-agent-indicted-making-false-statements-and-obstruction-justice>

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