

**PRESS RELEASE**

# Former Williamson County State's Attorney Sentenced

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Missouri

BENTON, Ill. – Former Williamson County State's Attorney Brandon Zanotti was sentenced Wednesday to two years of probation, a \$5,000 fine and 20 hours of community service for a scheme to sell seven commercial rental properties by falsifying loan and other bank documents.

The suspension of Zanotti's law license is pending before the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

Zanotti pleaded guilty in March in U.S. District Court in Benton to one felony count of aiding and abetting the making of a false bank entry. He admitted that in an April 6, 2022, meeting with a bank president and the buyer, they all agreed to fraudulently make it appear as if the loan to buy the properties in Williamson and Franklin counties was actually a refinancing. Documents were backdated to falsely indicate the buyer purchased the properties on Feb. 1, 2022, for the falsely inflated price of \$545,152. The documents also falsely indicated that the bank was refinancing 80% of that loan, with the buyers bringing 20% in cash to the sale. The real sales price for the properties was \$436,122, and the buyers were not bringing any cash to the transaction. The bank's loan to the buyers was approved by the bank's loan committee based upon the false information.

Zanotti resigned as State's Attorney later that year.

The FBI Springfield Office and the Federal Housing Finance Agency Office of Inspector General investigated the case. The prosecution was handled by Special Attorney Hal Goldsmith from the Eastern District of Missouri. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Illinois was recused from the case.

**Contact**

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