



NEWS RELEASE

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GRAND JURY INDICTS LIQUOR STORE OWNER

A Denver Grand jury returned a 52-count indictment yesterday against the owner of Daveco Liquors and two of his brothers. The charges, which are the result of an investigation by the City of Thornton Auditor's Office, the Thornton Police Department and the Colorado Department of Revenue, allege an ongoing scam that cheated the Department of Revenue and City of Thornton out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales tax revenue.

Hani D. Sawaged (dob: 01-30-53), **Ghassan D. Sawaged** (dob: 12-02-54), and **Bassam D. Sawaged** (dob: 11-26-63) are charged with *violating the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (COCCA) (F2)*, and numerous other felony counts that include *conspiracy to commit theft and computer crime (F4)*, *theft-series(F3)*, *computer crime (F3)*, *tax violation (F5)*, *filing a false tax return (F5)*, *tax evasion (F5)* and *conspiracy to commit tax evasion (F6)*.

The charges allege that from at least January 2007 through August 2008, Sawaged and his brothers logged fictitious merchandise returns and took \$5.4 million dollars in cash from Daveco Liquors. They are suspected of using at least \$2 million of that cash to pay some of their liquor distributors. The result of this activity is an alleged underreporting and underpaying of sales tax to the City of Thornton and to the Colorado Department of Revenue causing losses in excess of \$450,000.

Arrest warrants have been issued for all three defendants; arrangements are being made for their surrender. Their next court date has not yet been set.