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***News Release***

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|  | For the attention of **News Desks** | | No. of pages: | | 3 |
|  | Date: | 9 August 2018 | Ref: | LON 13 18 |  |

**The fraudster, the liar and the £60k booze scam**

A fraudster, who evaded nearly £60,000 in duty on smuggled alcohol, has been jailed, with his dishonest associate also sentenced after lying to investigators.

Builder Dilbagh Singh Dhillon, 39, from Hayes, West London, had 46,318 litres of alcohol stored in an industrial unit in Hounslow owned by Sartaj Singh Gill, 33, from High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Officers from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) seized the booze during a raid on 15 September, 2016.

They found a diary with detailed recordings of alcohol orders and cash payments. Under questioning, Dhillon admitted owning the diary, but said that someone else had made the entries in the book. Handwriting analysis later proved it was his writing.

Gill lied to officers and tried to cover for Dhillon by saying another individual was the tenant of the unit where the alcohol was stored. Investigators unravelled his story and Gill eventually admitted to providing a false witness statement.

Simon Kiefer, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Dhillon was stealing from the taxpayer and undercutting legitimate traders. Money that should have been going to vital public services was going into his pocket. Gill lied and tried to pervert the course of justice. They’ve now been found guilty and we can begin working on getting that money back.

“We urge any member of the public who may have information about anyone committing tax fraud to get in contact with us by calling 0800 788 887.”

Dhillon pleaded guilty to duty evasion and Gill admitted perverting the course of justice at Southwark Crown Court and were both sentenced on 6 August, 2018. Dhillon was jailed for 28 months and Gill was sentenced to 13 months in prison, suspended for 12 months.

Proceedings to recover the tax evaded has now started.

**Notes for editors**

Details of the defendants’ sentences:

1. Dilbagh Singh Dhillon (DOB 21/02/1979) of Hayes End Drive, London, UB4, admitted evasion of excise duty under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 and was sentenced to 28 months.
2. Sartaj Singh Gill (DOB 19.10.1984) of Marlow Road, High Wycombe admitted perverting the course of justice and was sentenced to 13 months, suspended for 12 months.
3. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

**Issued by HM Revenue & Customs Press Office**

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