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# Poisoning, arson, stalking allegations in divorce of prominent South Florida developer

Thirty-two years after Sergio and Tatiana Pino married, their divorce is marred by criminal allegations so serious that four men are in jail already without bond, and the FBI has confirmed it searched Sergio Pino's home and business for potential evidence

By **Tony Pipitone** • Published July 10, 2024 • Updated 4 mins ago

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Saying he is "overwhelmed and distraught," by what he called false allegations, prominent Miami-Dade homebuilder Sergio Pino has been granted a delay until January in a hearing that was set to begin Monday in the divorce case between him and his wife of 32 years, Tatiana.

Those allegations – involving claims of poisoning, arson, and stalking – are part of an ongoing federal investigation that has already resulted in the arrest of four people, including a man who Tatiana Pino identified as having worked for the couple on their yacht.

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Sergio Pino has not been charged with a crime, but the FBI has confirmed it searched the couple's \$8 million Coral Gables home and his business offices as part of an ongoing investigation.

Pino heads a building empire in Miami-Dade, much of it under the auspices of Century Homebuilders Group, whose website says it is the largest Hispanic-owned homebuilder in the nation. He has served as a president of the politically powerful Latin Builders Association.

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Over their decades together, Tatiana has often appeared by his side at formal events, but the public image of a happy, wealthy couple began to fade when she filed for divorce in April 2022.

If you see the word "Century" in a Miami-Dade development, it likely began with the Pino family and it's made Sergio Pino and company very wealthy.



Sergio and Tatiana Pino

One financial statement cited during his November 2023 deposition in the divorce case puts his and Tatiana’s combined net worth in 2021 at \$359 million; another produced in that same deposition put it at \$153 million. Pino testified he created the larger statement of financial position as “a joke” that included “made up” numbers, and said the smaller net worth statement was accurate.

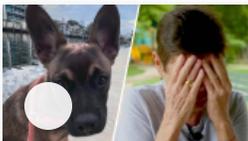
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Whatever the amount, how much of it that is rightfully Tatiana’s lies at the heart of a two-year divorce battle, one now featured in a federal criminal case involving four men indicted in what the feds call a “stalking conspiracy.”

They were allegedly involved in an Aug. 30, 2023 hit-and-run outside Tatiana's Pinecrest home as she was returning from a hearing in her divorce case.

Surveillance video shows a rented Home Depot flatbed truck waiting outside her home. As she arrives, the truck is thrown into reverse and circles backward, accelerating as it crashes into her passenger side door, then speeds away.

Michael Dulfo, one of the defendants investigators said was connected to the Home Depot rental, later told those investigators he was "contracted" to commit the crime "by someone working for the opposing party" in the Pino divorce case, according to an FBI agent's affidavit.

And when Tatiana was questioned about possible suspects, the FBI says she recognized one of them – 32-year-old Bayron Bennett – as having worked on the Pinos' yacht.

The criminal complaint against Bennett says he admitted soliciting Dulfo to commit the hit and run, as well as the torching of three vehicles in 2022 and 2023 outside this house belonging to Tatiana Pino's sister. He told agents someone asked him to seek out others to commit crimes against Tatiana, according to the complaint, which does not name who that "someone" may be.

Asked in a general sense what is going on here, Tatiana's attorney Raymond Rafool told NBC6 that is ultimately a matter for the FBI.

"That's what the investigation is," he said. "And what's going on is what they are determining, but I think it's pretty clear to everybody what's going on."

Sergio Pino's attorney, Deanna Shifrin, told NBC6 in a statement at least one thing is clear: Sergio Pino is an innocent man.

"We can categorically state that Mr. Pino was not involved in any of the alleged conduct," Shifrin said.

And they strongly dispute Tatiana's stated belief in a deposition that her husband had been trying to poison her, with Shifrin adding, "There is no objective evidence that Mrs. Pino was poisoned by anyone."

Tatiana testified she had been suffering from a mystery ailment – misdiagnosed by some as epilepsy – for years. But it wasn't until she was seen by specialists at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore that a culprit was identified: fentanyl, she said in her deposition.

“My client feels very strongly that he has been trying to poison her for two years before” filing for divorce, Rafool said.

Shifrin challenged that during Tatiana's September 2022 deposition, asking, “Why would you accuse Mr. Pino? On what basis?”

“Well, I just don't think that my housekeepers would have a motive. He would have a money motive maybe. A financial motive,” she replied, adding later, “I was sick for three years. I leave my house and I have never been sick again.”

Shifrin tried to delve deeper into the poisoning claims in that deposition, but Rafool objected and instructed Tatiana not to answer further because of the ongoing criminal investigation.

For his part, Sergio Pino said he, too, has been a victim.

“Mr. Pino has also been the victim of threats and acts of vandalism during his divorce proceedings,” Shifrin said.

Among them, he has alleged in his deposition, threatening phone calls from “Colombians” demanding he quickly settle the divorce, having a firearm fired in his direction as he tried to enter his house, and having his car set afire, the latter two incidents his attorney says were reported to police. No one has been arrested in connection to the incidents yet.

“To be clear,” Shifrin said, “Mr. Pino is devastated by attacks against him and his family and denies any suggestion that he is responsible for them.”

NBC6 sought comment from attorneys for the four men arrested – Bennett, Dulfo, Edner Etienne and Jerren Howard. They either did not return calls or declined to answer our questions. They have pled not guilty and are being held in federal custody without bond.

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