AUSA Devlin N. Su (312) 886-0667

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

CASE NUMBER:

UNDER SEAL

WEIXU,

also known as "Scarlett Hsu"

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about November 8, 2017, at Mundelein, in the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division,

and elsewhere, the defendant violated:

Code Section	Offense Description
Title 18, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1)	did knowingly distribute a controlled substance, namely, a quantity of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of n-phenyl-n-[1- (2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4-yl]butanamide, a Schedule I Controlled Substance

This criminal complaint is based upon these facts:

X Continued on the attached sheet.

JENNIFER VANN Special Agent, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: May 25, 2018

Judge's signature

City and state: <u>Chicago, Illinois</u>

YOUNG B. KIM, U.S. Magistrate Judge Printed name and Title

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

AFFIDAVIT

I, Jennifer Vann, being duly sworn, declare and state as follows:

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

1. I am a Special Agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") and have been employed as such since approximately October 2011. As such, I am an "investigator" within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2510(7); that is, an officer of the United States who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of offenses enumerated in Title 18, United States Code, Section 2516.

2. I am currently assigned to the Chicago Field Division Office. Throughout my career as a DEA Special Agent, I have received formal training, as well as extensive on-the-job training, relative to the investigation of the importation, transportation, sales, manufacturing, and distribution of controlled substances. I have participated in numerous investigations involving drug trafficking organizations, conspiracy, and distribution investigations. I have participated in all aspects of drug investigations, including the use of undercover officers, electronic surveillance, the execution of search and arrest warrants, investigative interviews, and the analysis of seized records, physical evidence, and taped conversations. I have also participated in federal investigations that have specifically involved the illegal trafficking of pharmaceutical controlled substances by medical doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacies, distributors, manufacturers, and in investigations that involved the illegal diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances.

3. Through my investigations, my training and experience, and my conversations with other law enforcement personnel, I have become familiar with the tactics and methods used by traffickers to smuggle and safeguard pharmaceutical controlled substances, to distribute and divert pharmaceutical controlled substances (including over the Internet), and to collect and launder the proceeds from the sale of controlled substances. Further, I am aware of the tactics and methods employed by pharmaceutical trafficking organizations and individuals to thwart investigation of their illegal activities.

4. I have been working closely with DEA Chicago Field Division Group 38, DEA Tactical Diversion Squad ("TDS"), Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Unit ("IRS"), Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") – Criminal Investigation Unit, and the Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"), on the investigation underlying this complaint affidavit.

5. This affidavit is submitted in support of a criminal complaint alleging that WEI XU, aka "Scarlett Hsu," has violated Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1). Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause in support of a criminal complaint charging XU with knowingly distributing a controlled substance, namely, a quantity of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin4-yl]butanamide, a Schedule I Controlled Substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) (the "**Subject Offense**"), I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that the defendant committed the **Subject Offense**.

6. The statements in this affidavit are based upon my personal observations, my training and experience, discussions with other law enforcement agents, officers, and investigators, documents and records that were collected and reviewed in the course of this investigation, information that was obtained from interviewed witnesses, reports prepared by individuals familiar with the subject of this Affidavit, email communications, and controlled purchases of controlled substances from the Subject Business.

II. <u>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</u>

A. Summary of the Investigation

7. In summary, law enforcement is currently investigating a business, 1717 CheMall Corporation (the "Subject Business") for illegally distributing controlled substances over the internet despite having never registered with federal or state authorities to do so.

8. As discussed below, law enforcement has conducted two controlled purchases of controlled substances of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4yl]butanamide (also known as butyryl fentanyl, a Schedule I controlled substance) from the Subject Business from approximately August 2017 to May 2018. During those controlled purchases, law enforcement viewed controlled substances for sale on the Subject Business's website, and corresponded with XU, who was using the alias "Scarlett Hsu," via email and telephone. The controlled substances were then shipped via FedEx from the Subject Business, with XU's name listed as the sender. Law enforcement subsequently identified XU as the "Scarlett Hsu" who handled these controlled purchases.

B. Controlled Substance Registration Requirements

9. Through training, experience, and discussions with other experienced agents, I know that the distribution of controlled substances must meet certain federal rules and regulations. Specifically, I know the following:

a. 21 U.S.C. § 812 classifies controlled substances in Schedule I through Schedule V depending on the level of potential for abuse, the current medical use, and the level of possible physical dependence. Controlled substances that are listed in Schedule I are drugs or other substances that have a high potential for abuse; these drugs or other substances have no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States and there is a lack of accepted safety for use of these drugs or other substances under medical supervision. Controlled substance pharmaceuticals are listed in Schedules II through V because they are drugs for which there is a substantial potential for abuse and addiction. There are other drugs available only by prescription but not classified as controlled substances. Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1308, provides further listings of scheduled drugs.

b. Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1310, provides further listings of listed chemicals. Under that section, certain chemicals are designated as List I chemicals. Under 21 C.F.R. § 1300.02, a List I chemical is a chemical that, in addition to legitimate uses, is used in manufacturing a controlled substance in violation of the Controlled Substances Act and is important to the manufacture of a controlled substance.

c. Pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 822, controlled substances or List I chemicals may only be prescribed, dispensed, or distributed by persons annually registered with the Attorney General of the United States to do so (with some exceptions, such as delivery persons). The Attorney General has delegated to the DEA authority to register such persons.

10. Distribution of controlled substances without having previously registered with the DEA is therefore a violation of the controlled substances laws, including 21 U.S.C. §§ 841 and 846. Additionally, under 21 U.S.C. § 957, no person may import into the customs territory of the United States from any place outside thereof (but within the United States), or import into the United States from any place outside thereof, any controlled substances or List I chemicals or export from the United States any controlled substances or List I chemicals unless there is in effect with respect to such person a registration issued by the Attorney General under 18 U.S.C. § 958, or unless such person is exempt from registration under § 957(b).

III. <u>FACTS ESTABLISHING PROBABLE CAUSE</u>

A. Background on the Subject Business

11. According to the Illinois Secretary of State, 1717 CheMall Corporation (the Subject Business) was registered as a domestic corporation on December 16, 2016. Individual A is listed as the registered agent, with a residential address in Northfield, Illinois. A president was not listed for the business; however, according to records for Bank of America accounts maintained by the Subject Business, WEI XU, the account holder, is listed as the President of the Subject Business.

12. The Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation ("IDFPR") licenses and regulates various professions and their members in Illinois, including distributors and manufacturers of controlled substances. According to records maintained by the IDFPR, neither the Subject Business nor XU is licensed in the State of Illinois as a distributor or a manufacturer of controlled substances or List I chemicals.

13. The DEA licenses and regulates the manufacture, sale, and distribution of controlled substances in the U.S. According to records maintained by the DEA, neither the Subject Business is XU are registered as a distributor, manufacturer, importer, or exporter of controlled substances or List I chemicals.

14. Despite not having registered to distribute controlled substances, the Subject Business advertises Schedule I-V controlled substances for sale on their publicly accessible website, www.1717chem.com. Purchases and inquiries can be made via their email address, sales@1717chem.com, or via phone at 224-864-4180. As the below website screenshot states, the Subject Business offers the ability to search for a desired controlled substance and browse its "estore."

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EXECUTE TO NEAR PERFECTION		
Products	AMINO ACIDS, PEPTIDES, AND PROTEINS NAME SKULMP, MW, CASP SEARCH	
AMINO ACIDS, PEPTIDES, AND PROTEINS	OLDWARD	
BOTANIC EXTRACTS, ENZYMES AND COENZYMES		
CARBOHYDRATES		
ORUG-LIKE MOLECULES AND API		
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INORGANIC CHEMICALS	and here and the second second	
LIPIDS	I D I I I MANN M STOR	
MACROMOLECULAR SUBSTANCES		
NUCLEIC ACIDS, NUCLEOTIDES, AND NUCLEOSIDES	M K Colu	11 [24

15. As pictured in the below screenshots of the Subject Business's website taken on or about May 24, 2018, the website currently advertises the opioids ocfentanil (Schedule I), oxycodone (Schedule II), and hydrocodone (Schedule II):

Ocfentanil

CheMall Emails	224)864-4180; Fa ales@1717chem.c	u: +1(224)86- om	4-4173				<i>ه</i> م	sarch 🗃	ii) Abox	nus)	ų нуса	rt 📑 Inquiries @) Login	@ Currency\$ -
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Oxycodone

Identification	
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9KU B00787826 NAME HVDROGEN 17-4VDROXY-13-48ETH0XY-13-0XA-4-A	
NUMAC NAME HYDROGEN 11-HYDROGY-10-METHOXY-4-METHYL-12-OXA-4-A	
M.8. C18H22CIN04	
M.W. 151.83	
CAS# 124-90-3 EC# Urknown	
CC Cole CriteCole	
SML85 [H+1(0+1COC1=C20C3C1=C20C3C1=C1)=C2C3C4	
NOH KEY INDIGEDBADIVOLO-UHEFFADISA-N	
Price, Purity and Availability	
Properties and Storage	
Regulatory	
Classification and Labeling	

Hydrocodone

Identification		
	A.	
	Show 2D Structure	
SKU	8608011507	
IURAC NAME	LL+)-TARTARIC ACID HYDROCODONE HYDRATE (15.58,138,178)-10-METHOXY-4-METHYL-12-OXA-4-AZARE	
M.F.	(10,00,104,104) 101/06/16/06/16/06/16/16/16/06/16/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06/06	
M.W.	467.471	
CAS#	34195-34-1,8017-14-9,6190-38-1	
EC# HS Code	Unknown Unknown	
MULES SMILES	0.0(CBH)([CBBH](0)(0)=0)(0)(+0.C0C1=C20(CBH)(C(=0	
INCHEREY	InCNIGY+ZICR/LQ1M/VSOU-NSIZERM15A-N	
Price, Purity and Dailability		
Properties and Storage		
Regulatory		
Classification and Labeling		

B. Controlled Purchases of Controlled Substances from the Subject Business

16. Law enforcement has conducted two controlled purchases of butyryl fentanyl from XU, aka "Scarlett Hsu," at the Subject Business.

November 8, 2017 Purchase

17. On or about August 17, 2017, a law enforcement undercover agent ("UC") called the Subject Business at their sales number, 224-864-4180, to ask for the price for 5 grams of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4-yl]butanamide, also known as butyryl fentanyl (Schedule I). Below is a screenshot of that substance's availability on the **Subject Business**'s website, 1717chem.com. The website directed the user to "call for price."



18. Law enforcement then called the Subject Business's sales number, 224-864-4180, and spoke to an employee who introduced herself as "Scarlett," who was later identified as XU.¹ During the consensually recorded telephone call, XU stated in summary that a price quote would be issued by email, and stated that the best way to order products was to send the order to sales@1717chem.com. Law enforcement then created a customer account on the Subject Business's website using a purported business name and address. The following day, law enforcement received an email XU, identified herself "Scarlett Hsu" from who as and was using sales@1717chem.com.² The email stated stating that 5 grams of butyryl fentanyl would cost \$5,858.00.

19. On or about August 23, 2017, law enforcement again called the **Subject Business** at their sales number, 224-864-4180, and again spoke to XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett." During this consensually recorded call, when asked for a price quote for the butyryl fentanyl, XU gave a price of \$5,823 for five grams and \$35 for shipping, which totaled \$5,858. After law enforcement provided XU with credit card information, she asked law enforcement to send her an email with the billing address

¹ I believe that the "Scarlett" speaking on the consensually recorded telephone calls described in this affidavit is XU for several reasons. First, law enforcement has reviewed all of the consensually recorded telephone calls with the individual who introduced herself as "Scarlett," and believes that the voices of "Scarlett" belong to the same person. Second, as discussed below in paragraphs 29-31, law enforcement surveillance has indicated that only XU works at the Subject Business, and XU self-identified as "Scarlett" during a traffic stop. For all of those reasons, I believe that XU was using the alias "Scarlett" during these telephone calls.

² I believe that XU used email address sales@1717chem.com while sending the emails discussed in this affidavit for several reasons. First, the signature block of the email identified the user as "Scarlett Hsu," and as discussed in footnote 1, I believe XU uses the alias "Scarlett Hsu" at the Subject Business. Second, the substance of the emails relate to the specific orders of controlled substances discussed by law enforcement over the telephone with XU, so I believe that XU also communicated about these same subjects over email.

and the shipping address, as well as the name and phone number of the recipient. Law enforcement then emailed this information to sales@1717chem.com.

20. On or about October 4, 2017,law enforcement emailed sales@1717chem.com to check on the status of the ordered controlled substance. On or about October 9, 2017, law enforcement received a response from XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett Hsu" and was using sales@1717chem.com. XU stated, "I receive an update from the lab that the synthesis going smooth so far, and they need one week to get the crude product, one week to purify, and one week to do the testing. For some reason there is only one lab willing to take your project. I will keep you posted."

21. On or about October 23, 2017, law enforcement received an email from XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett Hsu" and was using sales@1717chem.com. XU stated, "I am very glad to inform that we have successfully synthesized the product in your order, please see attached NMR and structure for your reference. Please kindly confirm so we can start the shipment arrangement, it usually takes 5-7 working days from the lab to our facility in Mundelein, IL [the location of the Subject Business]. Once we receive it we will ship out the same day." Law enforcement responded that it would like XU to ship the controlled substance immediately.

22. On or about November 7, 2017, law enforcement received an email from XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett Hsu" and was using sales@1717chem.com. XU stated, "Can you please sign the attached intended use file before we ship the product

today." The email attachment named the ordered controlled substance and quantity and contained a disclaimer: "1717 CheMall's Products are intended primarily for laboratory research purposes and, are not to be used for any other purposes, including but not limited to, in vitro diagnostic purposes, in foods, drugs, medical devices or cosmetics for humans or animals or for commercial purposes." Based on my training and experience, I believe this is a common disclaimer that is used by internet drug traffickers on the mistaken belief that the disclaimer absolves them of criminal liability for distributing controlled substances. Law enforcement signed the disclaimer and emailed it back to XU.

23. On or about November 8, 2017, the controlled substance arrived at the undercover address via FedEx. The package was addressed to the undercover name and address; the shipper information provided, "WEI XU, 222 Terrace Drive, Mundelein, Illinois 60060 [the current address for the Subject Business]." The package contained one bottle labeled as five grams of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4-yl]butanamide. According to the DEA North Central Laboratory, the substance in the bottle consisted of n-(1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)-N-phenylbutyramide, also known as butyrylfentanyl, a Schedule I controlled substance.

Subsequent Recorded Calls with XU

24. On or about January 9, 2018, the UC placed a consensually recorded call to the Subject Business at their sales number, 224-864-4180. The UC stated, "I got a quick question for you guys. I purchased an item from you guys and I got it delivered

in December, I just wanted to see if the pricing had changed."³ XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett,"⁴ responded, "So you want to order the same product and you want to check whether the price has changed?" The UC replied, "Yes, I just wanted to see if the price has changed and then I wanted to ask about a different product." XU said, "It's ok, we handle that. Can you give me the first one?" The UC stated, "It's 1169-70-6 [the CAS number⁵ for butyryl fentanyl]. I think the last time I purchased five grams, it was around 5800 dollars, a little bit more." XU replied, "So this one, we shipped in November [referencing the November 8, 2017 controlled purchase described above].... Ok, so five grams.... How much you going to order this time?" The UC responded, "If we do, it would be five grams again but I gotta get approval, they wanted me to check if the price was still the same." XU stated, "For now, I can keep the same price, but I need to check one more day, ok?" The UC asked, "And would it take as long as it did last time? It took a couple of months." XU said, "No, no,

³ Throughout this affidavit, I describe various conversations that were consensually recorded. These descriptions often include my understanding of what is being said during such conversations in brackets or otherwise. This understanding and interpretation of the conversations is based on (i) the content and context of the conversations, (ii) my experience and my fellow agents' experiences as law enforcement officers, including our experience observing written conversations as a whole, and (iii) the investigation to date. The summaries of the intercepted conversations set forth in this affidavit are based on draft—not final—transcriptions. Finally, the summaries contained herein do not include all potentially criminal communications recorded, or topics covered during the course of the recorded conversations.

⁴ At the end of this call, the UC asked, "Your name was Scarlett, right?" XU responded, "Yes, yes, I remember you too."

⁵ A CAS number is a unique numerical identifier assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) to every chemical substance described in the open scientific literature.

no, this time it's gonna be quick." The UC asked, "You think less than a month?" XU responded, "Yes. Because I remember we changed the labs. And the second one get it done very quick [the Subject Business has changed the laboratory providing it with butyryl fentanyl and its new laboratory is able to fill orders a lot quicker]. . . . So you don't have to worry about it. So we're going to go through the second supplier. The first one, they failed, they inform us they failed the experiment so we have the second one, and they do it very quick." After the UC asked if the UC could inquire about another substance, XU stated, "For that one, you got to send me email because I want to make sure it's get into the system. . . . Every day I get so many requests [the Subject Business is very busy taking orders every day], I don't want it to get lost, yours." The UC then said that the UC would email the Subject Business.

25. On or about March 29, 2018, law enforcement again called the Subject Business at their sales number, 224-864-4180. A UC asked XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett,"⁶ if she could provide a price quote for a product. XU stated, "You have to submit it from the website, because we launched a new system, that would be much easier for you to submit. . . . We just got so many [orders], I cannot handle so many Cause for us, we have to get lots of information from you, if every customer we get, then, how much quantity, what's the country, how we going to give the quote out, you know, quick?"

⁶ At the end of the call, the other person stated that her name was "Scarlett."

May 2018 Purchase

26.On or about May 9, 2018, law enforcement again called the Subject Business at their sales number, 224-864-4180. The UC asked, "Hello, Scarlett?" XU responded, "Yes." During this consensually recorded call, law enforcement asked to place an order of butyryl fentanyl with XU over the phone. XU asked, "Is what you're looking for one gram from New York?" The UC responded, "Yes. . . . one [one gram], I got the CAS number, it's 1169-70-6. It was one gram, I think the price was like 1480 [\$1,480]." XU responded, "I think, uh, probably I remember you. Just give me the CAS number one more time now." The UC replied, "Sure. 1169-70-6." XU said, "Ok. One second. Let me check it first. . . . is it, bu-? bu-ty-ren [butyryl fentanyl]?" The UC stated, "Yes, butytrl fentanyl." XU stated, "Yes. You got a quote right?" The UC responded, "I do, I do have the, yeah. The quote was, I think on the website was 1433 [\$1433], and I think uh, the credit card was gonna charge like 1487 [\$1487]. But it didn't, for some reason it didn't go through. So I wanted to see if I could just email you the CAS number and then put my information." XU replied, "One gram is 1277 [\$1277]. You order one gram? . . . Oh, I remember you now. Ok. Cause, cause, when you wrote me this email, I check it and this, nobody charge. I mean it's not successful charge to your credit card. So, um anyway, you can give that credit card to me instead of submitting." The UC stated, "I'm ready, you ready?" XU replied, "Ok, just one second. Ah, today is much better. Yesterday, my gosh, I got so many credit card order, you know, people calling in. . . . Ah, yesterday, crazy busy! Crazy, my gosh! Anyway, on this one. Let me see because I have the quote here. . . . It's, uh, BG07876260 [an order reference number] and the CAS number 1169 70 6. You ordered one gram right? That's 1277 [\$1277]. One gram plus shipping and the FTS processing, so it's uh, another 50. So it's 1347 [\$1347] total." The UC then provided XU with payment details for an undercover Visa credit card. After XU instructed the UC to email "the billing address and shipping address, attention, and a phone number," law enforcement emailed its billing and shipping information to sales@1717chem.com.

27. Later that day, law enforcement received a response from XU, who identified herself as "Scarlett Hsu" and was using sales@1717chem.com, confirming the order. The email stated, "This is to confirm that your below order has been processed: Product: 1 G BG07876260, BUTYRFENTANYL. Thanks for doing business with 1717 Chemall Corporation. Sincerely Yours, Scarlett Hsu, Ph.D."

28. On or about May 18, 2018, the controlled substance arrived at the undercover address via FedEx. The package was addressed to the undercover name and address; the shipper information provided, "WEI XU, 222 Terrace Drive, Mundelein, Illinois 60060 [the current address for the Subject Business]." The package contained one bottle labeled as one gram of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4-yl]butanamide, butyryl fentanyl. Laboratory testing of this substance is currently pending, but based on my training and experience, including my experience successfully receiving a controlled substance that was accurately

labeled by the Subject Business as discussed above, I believe that the substance received was the butyryl fentanyl that law enforcement ordered.

C. Identification of WEI XU as "Scarlett"

29. Law enforcement surveillance of the Subject Business has indicated that it appears that only WEIXU works at the Subject Business. For example, on or about March 23, 2018, at approximately 8:31 a.m., law enforcement observed XU (who was positively identified from a comparison to a driver's license photograph of XU) enter the parking lot of the Subject Business and park in front of the entrance. XU used a key to unlock the front door and enter the Subject Business. From that time to when law enforcement terminated surveillance at approximately 1:00 p.m., law enforcement did not observe any other individuals enter or exit the building. Similarly, on or about March 27, 2018, at approximately 1:02 p.m., law enforcement observed XU park in front of the Subject Business. XU walked to the front door of the Subject Business and used a key to unlock the front door and enter the business. From that time until law enforcement terminated surveillance at approximately 4:00 p.m., law enforcement did not observe any other individuals enter or exit the business.

30. On or about May 22, 2018, law enforcement surveillance observed XU exit the Subject Business at approximately 1:05 p.m. At approximately 2:00 p.m., law enforcement conducted a traffic stop of XU. During the stop, XU stated that she has a Ph.D and works at the Subject Business importing and exporting pharmaceuticals. When asked if she goes by any other names, XU stated that she goes by the name "Scarlett" at work and is thinking about legally changing her name to "Scarlett." After the stop, XU traveled back to the Subject Business.

31. Based on the foregoing, I believe that WEI XU is the only employee working at the Subject Business, and that she used the alias "Scarlett Hsu" when processing the controlled purchases of butyryl fentanyl discussed above.

IV. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

32. Based on the above information, there is probable cause to believe that on or about November 8, 2017, at Mundelein, in the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, and elsewhere, WEI XU, also known as "Scarlett Hsu," did knowingly distribute a controlled substance, namely, a quantity of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of n-phenyl-n-[1-(2-phenylethyl)piperidin-4-yl]butanamide, a Schedule I Controlled Substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1).

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

JENNIFER VANN Special Agent, Drug Administration

Enforcement

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me on May 25, 2018.

YOUNG B. KIM United States Magistrate Judge