

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

* CRIMINAL NO.: 17-201

v.

* SECTION: "I"

CHUKWUDI OFOMATA

*

FACTUAL BASIS

Defendant **CHUKWUDI OFOMATA ("OFOMATA")** has decided to enter a plea of guilty to Count Three of the Second Superseding Indictment in the above-captioned matter. Should this matter have proceeded to trial, the United States would have proven the following facts beyond a reasonable doubt, through credible testimony, and reliable evidence. The facts outlined herein occurred within the jurisdiction of the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Planning and Preparation of the Hobbs Act Robbery

Approximately two weeks prior to the morning of the December 18, 2013 robbery of the Chase Bank located at 2331 South Carrollton Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana, defendant, Lilbear George (hereinafter "George") conducted surveillance of the Chase Bank in preparation for the robbery. Prior to the robbery, George met with a longtime friend and informed him/her that he along with associates planned to rob the Loomis Armored, Inc. (hereinafter "Loomis") guard who delivered U.S. currency at Chase Bank. George confessed that he had been watching the Loomis deliveries being made at the Chase Bank for weeks in preparation for the robbery.

After the commission of the robbery, co-conspirator Robert Brumfield confessed to an individual (later identified herein as “Individual-3”) that the defendants had been “stalking a truck for a few weeks,” and that the driver was “a big clumsy dude.”

Telephone records, including historical cell site data, obtained from Sprint, and examined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereinafter “FBI”), confirmed that George was located in the proximity of Chase Bank on the two Wednesday mornings prior to December 18, 2013. On the mornings of December 4, 2013 and December 11, 2013, George arrived at Chase to surveil the bank and the deliveries made by Loomis. On the aforementioned mornings, George was in possession of a Sprint cellular telephone, assigned telephone number [REDACTED].

In preparation for the robbery, George stole the vehicle that would be used to commit the robbery. On the morning of December 11, 2013, T.L., the owner of a dark grey Chevrolet Tahoe, with dark tinted windows, exited her apartment and observed that her Tahoe had been stolen. T.L. reported the theft of the vehicle to the New Orleans Police Department.

Hours after T.L. reported the theft of her Chevrolet Tahoe, Loomis employees Hector Trochez and his partner, K.R., were preparing to make a delivery of U.S. currency at the Chase Bank located at 2331 South Carrollton Avenue. Trochez drove the Loomis truck while K.R. was the passenger. As the passenger, K.R. was responsible for making the delivery of the currency inside of the bank. Upon arriving at Chase, K.R. exited the vehicle. K.R. directed Trochez into the parking spot that the Loomis truck would occupy during the delivery. K.R. observed a grey SUV truck parked in a parking spot on the driver’s side of the Loomis truck. K.R. observed three unknown black males inside of the SUV. K.R. believed that the males were watching her. After entering the bank and returning to the Loomis truck, K.R. noticed that the grey SUV remained in

the parking spot. The occupants of the grey SUV remained inside of the vehicle while K.R. went into the Chase Bank. Upon exiting the bank and returning to the Loomis truck, K.R. asked Trochez if the males inside of the Tahoe ever exited the vehicle. Trochez told K.R. that no one exited the vehicle. K.R. and Trochez departed the Chase Bank. While leaving the bank, K.R. observed the grey SUV follow the Loomis truck as she and Trochez traveled to their next location.

The Robbery and Murder of Loomis Armored Truck Driver Hector Trochez

On the morning of December 18, 2013, **OFOMATA** and co-conspirators, George, Jeremy Esteves (hereinafter “Esteves”), Curtis Johnson, Jr. (hereinafter “Johnson”), and Robert Brumfield, III (hereinafter “Brumfield”) (collectively “co-conspirators”) robbed the Chase Bank and committed the murder of Trochez. Prior to the robbery, **OFOMATA** and his co-conspirators agreed to rob the Loomis truck; and in doing so, assigned specific roles to each co-conspirator to carry out the commission of the robbery. **OFOMATA** and the co-conspirators learned about the Loomis deliveries from a known individual who was employed at the S. Carrollton Avenue and Claiborne Avenue Chase branch. Esteves knew the Chase Bank employee and learned that the Loomis truck made scheduled deliveries to the Chase branch on Wednesdays at approximately 10:00 a.m. The co-conspirators used this information to prepare for and plan the robbery.

In August 2016, the FBI interviewed an individual referenced herein as Individual-1. According to Individual-1, he/she was at his/her residence when **OFOMATA** arrived at the residence. Upon entering the residence, **OFOMATA** walked directly to the closet and retrieved a black duffel bag from the closet. According to Individual-1, **OFOMATA** stored an assault type rifle, similar to an AK-47, in the duffel bag with a magazine. The bag contained additional firearms and a ski mask. Individual-1 asked **OFOMATA** why he was taking the firearms from the

residence. In response, **OFOMATA** told Individual-1, "we about to go." Individul-1 asked **OFOMATA** where "they" were going. **OFOMATA** responded, "Just watch the news. We about to be straight. We gonna get the money." **OFOMATA** began to exit the residence. Individual-1 followed behind **OFOMATA**. Upon exiting the residence, Individual-1 observed a "dark colored Tahoe." Individual-1 looked through the front windshield of the vehicle and observed Esteves, Johnson, and George inside of the vehicle. Individual-1 observed Esteves driving the Tahoe. George was seated in the rear of the vehicle. Johnson was seated in the front passenger seat. Individual-1 observed **OFOMATA** place the duffel back in the back of the Tahoe before the leaving the residence.

Trochez and his partner, A.T., arrived at the Chase Bank located at S. Carrollton Avenue and Claiborne Avenue. Trochez drove the Loomis truck. Upon arriving, A.T. exited the Loomis truck and directed the truck into a parking space near the door of the bank's entrance. Within seconds of the Loomis truck beginning to back into the parking spot, the stolen, dark grey Chevy Tahoe arrived in the parking lot and backed into a parking spot one car away from the Loomis truck. **OFOMATA**, George, Esteves, and Johnson occupied the vehicle.

Trochez exited the Loomis truck, walked to the rear of the truck, unloaded a metal cart, and began loading boxes of coins onto the metal cart. After loading the coin boxes and a bag containing paper currency, Trochez closed the back door of the Loomis truck and prepared to deliver the currency, approximately two hundred sixty-five thousand dollars (\$265,000.00), inside the bank. As he began to do so, the rear doors of the Chevy Tahoe opened. George, armed with a .45 caliber handgun, was the first to exit the Tahoe. George ordered Trochez to "Give it up." **OFOMATA** exited the rear doors armed with a .223 rifle. In response to seeing George and

OFOMATA with weapons, Trochez pulled his gun and fired in the direction of the robbers. Johnson, armed with a firearm, exited the vehicle. **OFOMATA** and George fired their weapons in Trochez's direction. Johnson fired at the Loomis truck to keep A.T. inside the Loomis truck. Trochez was fatally struck on the left side of his forehead and suffered a graze wound to his elbow. One of the robbers ran towards the rear of the Loomis truck and took possession of the money bag before re-entering the Tahoe. The robbers fled the Chase Bank parking lot.

Co-conspirator Brumfield was assigned the role of "getaway" driver. Prior to the robbery, George and the co-conspirators agreed to stash a second vehicle at a vacant lot located in the 1700 block of Adams Street. **OFOMATA** provided the get-a-way vehicle, a Honda Accord. The Honda Accord belonged to **OFOMATA**'s girlfriend. Historical telephone records obtained from a Sprint telephone, assigned telephone number [REDACTED], and associated with Brumfield, confirmed that on the morning of the robbery, Brumfield was in the vicinity of the Adams Street location prior to the robbery and after the robbery.

Witnesses to the shooting described seeing the robbers wearing all black clothing and face coverings during the shooting. The New Orleans Police Department investigated the robbery/murder and collected numerous .45 caliber and .223 caliber casings from the Chase Bank parking lot. Fragments of U.S. currency were collected from the parking lot. A surveillance camera affixed to the Chase Bank captured the robbery/murder.

The Initial Investigation

Numerous witnesses observed the robbery/murder on the day of the shooting. One individual, referred to hereafter as "Individual-2," was seated in his vehicle, positioned at a red light at the corner of S. Claiborne Avenue and Carrollton Avenue. Individual-2 observed the

shooting and provided a description of the shooters and the vehicle they occupied. After the shooting, Individual-2 followed the Chevy Tahoe as it fled the location of the shooting/robbery. Individual-2 continued to follow the vehicle as it sped through uptown New Orleans. During the vehicle's flight, one of the shooters fired his firearm in the direction of Individual-2 to stop Individual-2 from following the Chevy Tahoe. Individual-2 observed the Chevy Tahoe arrive in the 1700 block of Adams Street. Upon arriving at the location, Individual-2 observed the four robbers exit the Chevy Tahoe and enter the awaiting Honda Accord being driven by Brumfield. After the individuals entered the Honda Accord, they fled the Adams Street location, leaving the Chevy Tahoe behind.

The Chevy Tahoe was recovered by the New Orleans Police Department and searched pursuant to a federal search warrant. During the search, FBI agents observed that the steering wheel column of the vehicle had been breached. Agents located two screwdrivers on the floorboard of the Tahoe. The screwdrivers were collected and submitted for DNA testing at the Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory. An unknown DNA profile, later confirmed to be that of George, was recovered from one of the screwdrivers. Based on the recovery of George's DNA from the screwdriver, an arrest warrant was issued for George.

During the robbery, Johnson used a black handkerchief to cover his face. During the execution of the search warrant on the Chevy Tahoe, the handkerchief was located on the passenger seat of the vehicle and submitted for DNA testing. Results from the DNA test revealed that the unknown profile recovered from the handkerchief belonged to Johnson.

After the robbery, NOPD received information from an individual who encountered the Chevy Tahoe prior to the robbery. According to the individual, while traveling to the Chase bank

branch at 2331 South Carrollton Avenue, his/her vehicle was nearly struck by the gray SUV. The individual engaged in a verbal altercation with an occupant of the Tahoe. While the individual could not see the other occupants inside the Chevy, he/she observed an additional passenger, who was attempting to calm the occupant with whom he/she was arguing with. That evening, the individual learned of the robbery from watching the local news. Believing that he/she had experienced an encounter with the bank robbers, the individual contacted NOPD to provide a physical description of the individual he/she argued with. NOPD created a composite sketch of the occupant of the Tahoe and released the sketch to the public.

Confession of Chukwudi Ofomata

In August 2016, FBI met with Individual-1. During the interview, Individual-1 told agents that on the day of the robbery/murder, **OFOMATA** returned to Individual-1's residence. **OFOMATA** asked Individual-1 if he/she had watched the news. Individual-1 answered in the affirmative. Based on the conversation, Individual-1 understood that **OFOMATA** was admitting that he and the co-conspirators committed the robbery/murder.

The day after the robbery, **OFOMATA** fled to Houston, Texas. Prior to leaving, **OFOMATA** stashed proceeds from the robbery in an air conditioning unit at Individual-1's residence. Upon returning from Houston, Texas, **OFOMATA** met with Individual-1. **OFOMATA** confessed to Individual-1 that he and the co-conspirators split the proceeds taken from the robbery and that **OFOMATA** received between \$50,000.00 and \$60,000.00 in U.S. currency. **OFOMATA** told Individual-1 that some of the stolen currency had sustained gunfire when "we shot the guard."

Confession of Co-Conspirator Lilbear George

In February 2014, FBI was notified that an individual, referred to as Individual-3, an associate of **OFOMATA**, George, Esteves, Johnson, and Brumfield had information about the Chase robbery/murder. FBI interviewed Individual-3. According to Individual-3, in January 2014, he/she traveled from New Orleans to Houston, Texas with George. Prior to leaving New Orleans, George confessed to Individual-3 that he and the co-conspirators robbed the Loomis truck and killed the security guard. George confessed that he and the co-conspirators planned the robbery over time. George confirmed that **OFOMATA** shot Trochez. George admitted that he shot at Trochez as well. George recounted that one of the shooters shot the money bag, resulting in pieces of currency being left in the parking lot. Additionally, George confessed that one of the robbers, later identified as Johnson, shot at the Loomis truck to keep Trochez's partner inside of the truck during the shooting. As it relates to the currency, George told Individual-3 that **OFOMATA** grabbed the bag of currency after the shooting and before the Tahoe fled the bank. George told Individual-3 that the co-conspirators split the money amongst themselves and provided money to the "girl" at the Chase Bank who provided Esteves with information about the Loomis deliveries.

Individual-3 detailed his/her trip from New Orleans to Texas with George in the aftermath of the shooting. According to Individual-3, he/she observed George with a large amount of hundred-dollar bills located in a bag. Individual-3 recalled that some of the money, approximately \$60,000.00, which he/she observed George possess, had been struck with bullet holes. While traveling, George showed Individual-3 the composite sketch that was released to the public. George asked if the person depicted in the sketch resembled either him, George or the co-

conspirators. Additionally, George admitted to stealing the Chevrolet Tahoe that was used to commit the robbery.

In April 2014, George contacted Individual-3. In April, a local newspaper obtained the sealed federal arrest warrant for George. The warrant contained the results of the DNA testing conducted on the screwdriver recovered from the grey Chevrolet Tahoe. Upon learning that his DNA was recovered from the screwdriver, George contacted Individual-3 about the article. George confessed a second time to his, **OFOMATA**'s, and the co-conspirators' roles in the robbery/murder.

Confession of Co-Conspirator Jeremy Esteves

In May 2014, FBI agents interviewed Individual-3. According to Individual-3, he/she met with co-conspirator Esteves at his residence. While there, Esteves confessed that he, along with **OFOMATA** and the co-conspirators committed the December 18, 2013 Loomis robbery/murder. Esteves confessed that he, **OFOMATA**, and the co-conspirators planned the robbery for months prior to the robbery. According to Esteves, the co-conspirators would get up as early as 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. to watch the Chase Bank and learn the routine of the Loomis truck. Esteves admitted that he asked **GEORGE** to participate in the robbery.

Individual-3 observed proceeds from the robbery in Esteves's residence. While at the residence, Esteves showed Individual-3 shoeboxes that were located inside of Esteves's room. U.S. currency was stored inside of the shoeboxes.

Confession of Co-Conspirator Robert Brumfield

In October 2016, FBI agents met with an individual, hereinafter referred to as Individual-4. According to Individual-4, he/she met with co-conspirator Brumfield in early 2014. During their meeting, Brumfield was preparing to record a rap song about the 2013 robbery/murder. During the studio session, Brumfield told Individual-4 that **OFOMATA** and the co-conspirators committed the robbery/murder. Brumfield confessed that he was the getaway driver of the vehicle that was awaiting the robbers at the Adams Street location after they fled from the bank. Brumfield told Individual-4 that **OFOMATA** and the co-conspirators escaped in the getaway vehicle. Brumfield admitted that the getaway vehicle belonged to **OFOMATA**'s girlfriend.

Limited Nature of Factual Basis

This proffer of evidence is not intended to constitute a complete statement of all facts known by **OFOMATA**. Rather, it is a minimum statement of facts intended to prove the necessary factual predicate for his guilty plea. The limited purpose of this proffer is to demonstrate that there exists a sufficient legal basis for **OFOMATA**'s plea of guilty to the charged offenses.

READ AND APPROVED:

 5/25/21
BRITTANY L. REED Date
Assistant United States Attorney

 5/25/21
GREGORY M. KENNEDY Date
Assistant United States Attorney

 5/18/21
CHIUKWUDI OFOMATA Date
Defendant

 5/18/21
FRANK G. DESALVO Date
Attorney for the Defendant

 5/18/21
MICHAEL P. CIACCIO Date
Attorney for the Defendant

 5/18/21
SARAH L. OTTINGER Date
Attorney for the Defendant