

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
WESTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)
) No. 12 CR 50068
)
) Judge Frederick J. Kapala
JASON BOOTH)

PLEA AGREEMENT

1. This Plea Agreement between the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, ZACHARY T. FARDON, and defendant JASON BOOTH, and his attorney, FRANKLIN C. COOK, is made pursuant to Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. The parties to this Agreement have agreed upon the following:

Charge in This Case

2. The indictment in this case charges defendant with conspiracy to defraud the United States by making false claims, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 286.

3. Defendant has read the charge against him contained in the indictment, and that charge has been fully explained to him by his attorney.

4. Defendant fully understands the nature and elements of the crime with which he has been charged.

Charge to Which Defendant Is Pleading Guilty

5. By this Plea Agreement, defendant agrees to enter a voluntary plea of guilty to the indictment, which charges defendant with conspiracy to defraud the United States by making false claims, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 286.

Factual Basis

6. Defendant will plead guilty because he is in fact guilty of the charge contained in the indictment. In pleading guilty, defendant admits the following facts and that those facts establish his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt:

a. Generally, defendant admits that he knowingly combined, conspired and agreed with others to defraud the United States Department of the Treasury, by obtaining and aiding to obtain the payment and allowance of materially false, fictitious and fraudulent claims, namely false, fictitious, and fraudulent claims for individual income tax refunds.

b. Specifically, defendant admits that beginning approximately March 2006 and continuing through approximately January 2008, he created federal income tax returns that contained false information including false employers and withholding amounts. When he created the false returns, the defendant knew that the taxpayers whose names he put on

the false returns had not authorized him to use false information in the returns. Some of the taxpayers had authorized the defendant to create income tax returns for them, but many did not know the defendant and had not authorized the defendant to create their income tax returns. Due to the false information, the income tax returns claimed refunds that were not actually owed to the taxpayers. After creating the false returns, the defendant filed the false returns electronically with the Department of Treasury Internal Revenue Service, causing the returns to be processed. In those instances where the claimed refunds were approved and disbursed by the Internal Revenue Service, the refunds were wired to bank accounts that had been designated by the defendant when he electronically filed the false returns. Some of the designated accounts were owned by the defendant, but several were owned by other persons. The defendant had conspired and agreed with the owners of the other accounts that they could keep a portion of each refund in exchange for allowing the defendant to use their accounts for the deposit of the refunds. After refunds were deposited into their accounts, these co-conspirators withdrew the refunds, kept a portion for themselves, and delivered the balance of the refund to the defendant. The defendant sought to use the accounts owned by his co-conspirators because he was not always able to open accounts in his name and because using varied accounts made

discovery of his filing of false returns less likely. Among the false income tax returns filed by the defendant with the Department of Treasury Internal Service was an income tax return in the name of an individual ("J.W.") on or about January 16, 2008 and an income tax return in the name of an individual ("L.W.") on or about January 16, 2008. Among the refunds deposited into his co-conspirators' bank accounts were the following:

i. the deposit of a refund in the amount of \$1,226.34 into Union Savings Bank Account ***3362 on or about March 3, 2006;

ii. the deposit of a refund in the amount of \$5,034.15 into Union Savings Bank Account ***3362 on or about April 28, 2006;

iii. the deposit of a refund in the amount of \$5,038.60 into US Bank Account *****0070 on or about April 28, 2006.

As a result of the filing of the false federal income tax returns, \$159,926.98 was disbursed by the Department of Treasury Internal Revenue Service into the accounts designated by the defendant.

7. The government contends, and the Defendant reserves the right to disagree, that for the purpose of computing his sentence under the Sentencing Guidelines, the following conduct constitutes relevant conduct under Guideline §1B1.3:

Defendant admits that beginning approximately March 2006, and continuing through approximately January 2008, he created Iowa income tax returns that contained false information including false employers and withholding amounts. When he created the false returns, the defendant knew that the taxpayers whose names he put on the false returns had not authorized him to use false information in the returns. Some of the taxpayers had authorized the defendant to create income tax returns for them, but many did not know the defendant and had not authorized the defendant to create their income tax returns. Due to the false information, the income tax returns claimed refunds that were not actually owed to the taxpayers. After creating the false returns, the defendant filed the false returns electronically with the Iowa Department of Revenue, causing the returns to be processed. In those instances where the claimed refunds were approved and disbursed by the Iowa Department of Revenue, the refunds were wired to bank accounts that had been designated by the defendant when he electronically filed the false returns. Some of the designated accounts were owned by the defendant, but several were owned by other persons. The defendant had conspired and agreed with the owners of the other accounts that they could keep a portion of each refund in exchange for allowing the defendant to use their accounts for the deposit of the refunds. After refunds were deposited into their accounts,

these co-conspirators withdrew the refunds, kept a portion for themselves, and delivered the balance of the refund to the defendant. The defendant sought to use the accounts owned by his co-conspirators because he was not always able to open accounts in his name and because using varied accounts made discovery of his filing of false returns less likely. As a result of the filing of the false Iowa income tax returns, \$90,110.00 was disbursed by the Iowa Department of Revenue into the accounts designated by the defendant.

Maximum Statutory Penalties

8. Defendant understands that the charge to which he is pleading guilty carries the following statutory penalties:

a. A maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. This offense also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000. Defendant further understands that the judge also may impose a term of supervised release of not more than three years. The judge may also impose a term of probation of between 1 and 5 years.

b. Defendant further understands that the Court must order restitution to the victims of the offense in an amount determined by the Court.

c. In accord with Title 18, United States Code, Section 3013, defendant will be assessed \$100 on the charge to which he has pled guilty, in addition to any other penalty or restitution imposed.

Sentencing Guidelines Calculations

9. Defendant understands that in imposing sentence the Court will be guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands that the Sentencing Guidelines are advisory, not mandatory, but that the Court must consider the Guidelines in determining a reasonable sentence.

10. For purposes of calculating the Sentencing Guidelines, the parties agree on the following points, except as specified below:

a. **Applicable Guidelines.** The Sentencing Guidelines to be considered in this case are those in effect at the time of sentencing. The following statements regarding the calculation of the Sentencing Guidelines are based on the Guidelines Manual currently in effect, namely the November 2012 Guidelines Manual.

b. **Offense Level Calculations.**

i. The base offense level is 6, pursuant to Guideline § 2B1.1(a).

ii. The government contends, and the defendant reserves the right to disagree, that pursuant to Guideline 2B1.1(b)(1)(H), the offense level is increased by 14 levels to level 20, because the loss exceeded \$400,000.

iii. The government contends, and the defendant reserves the right to disagree, that pursuant to Guideline 2B1.1(b)(2)(B), the offense level is increased by 4 levels to level 24, because the offense involved 50 or more victims.

iv. The government contends, and the defendant reserves the right to disagree, that pursuant to Guideline 3B1.1(a), the offense level is increased by 4 levels to level 28, because the defendant was an organizer or leader of a criminal activity that involved five or more participants and was otherwise extensive.

v. Defendant has clearly demonstrated a recognition and affirmative acceptance of personal responsibility for his criminal conduct. If the government does not receive additional evidence in conflict with this provision, and if defendant continues to accept responsibility for his actions within the meaning of Guideline § 3E1.1(a), including by furnishing the United States Attorney's Office and the Probation Office with all requested financial information relevant to his ability to satisfy any fine or restitution that may be imposed in this case, a two-level reduction in the offense level is appropriate.

vi. In accord with Guideline § 3E1.1(b), defendant has timely notified the government of his intention to enter a plea of guilty,

thereby permitting the government to avoid preparing for trial and permitting the Court to allocate its resources efficiently. Therefore, as provided by Guideline § 3E1.1(b), if the Court determines the offense level to be 16 or greater prior to determining that defendant is entitled to a two-level reduction for acceptance of responsibility, the government will move for an additional one-level reduction in the offense level.

c. **Criminal History Category.** With regard to determining defendant's criminal history points and criminal history category, based on the facts now known to the government and stipulated below, defendant's criminal history points equal 5 and defendant's criminal history category is III:

i. On or about July 24, 2003, defendant was convicted of computer fraud in the Circuit Court of Stephenson County and sentenced to 126 days imprisonment. Pursuant to Guideline § 4A1.1(b), this conviction results in 2 criminal history points.

ii. On or about December 6, 2004, defendant was convicted of contempt of court in the Circuit Court of Stephenson County and sentenced to 20 days imprisonment. Pursuant to Guideline § 4A1.2(c)(1), this conviction results in no criminal history points.

iii. On or about September 16, 2009, defendant was convicted of financial institution fraud in the Circuit Court of Cook County

and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment. Pursuant to Guideline § 4A1.1(a), this conviction results in 3 criminal history points.

d. Anticipated Advisory Sentencing Guidelines Range.

Therefore, based on the facts now known to the government, the anticipated offense level is 25, which, when combined with the anticipated criminal history category of III, results in an anticipated advisory Sentencing Guidelines range of 70 to 87 months' imprisonment, in addition to any supervised release, fine, and restitution the Court may impose.

e. Defendant and his attorney and the government acknowledge that the above Guideline calculations are preliminary in nature, and are non-binding predictions upon which neither party is entitled to rely. Defendant understands that further review of the facts or applicable legal principles may lead the government to conclude that different or additional Guideline provisions apply in this case. Defendant understands that the Probation Office will conduct its own investigation and that the Court ultimately determines the facts and law relevant to sentencing, and that the Court's determinations govern the final Guideline calculation. Accordingly, the validity of this Agreement is not contingent upon the probation officer's or the Court's concurrence with the above calculations, and defendant shall not

have a right to withdraw his plea on the basis of the Court's rejection of these calculations.

f. Both parties expressly acknowledge that this Agreement is not governed by Fed.R.Crim.P. 11(c)(1)(B), and that errors in applying or interpreting any of the Sentencing Guidelines may be corrected by either party prior to sentencing. The parties may correct these errors either by stipulation or by a statement to the Probation Office or the Court, setting forth the disagreement regarding the applicable provisions of the Guidelines. The validity of this Agreement will not be affected by such corrections, and defendant shall not have a right to withdraw his plea, nor the government the right to vacate this Agreement, on the basis of such corrections.

Agreements Relating to Sentencing

11. The government agrees to recommend that the Court impose a sentence of imprisonment within the applicable guidelines range and to make no further recommendation concerning what sentence of imprisonment should be imposed.

12. It is understood by the parties that the sentencing judge is neither a party to nor bound by this Agreement and may impose a sentence up to the maximum penalties as set forth above. Defendant further acknowledges that if

the Court does not accept the sentencing recommendation of the parties, defendant will have no right to withdraw his guilty plea.

13. Regarding restitution, defendant acknowledges that pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, § 3663A, the Court must order defendant to make restitution in the amount of 159,926.98 to the Department of Treasury Internal Revenue Service, which amount shall reflect credit for any funds repaid prior to sentencing.

14. Regarding restitution, defendant also agrees to pay restitution arising from the relevant conduct set forth above to the Iowa Department of Revenue, totaling \$90,110, pursuant to §§ 3663(a)(3) and 3664.

15. Restitution shall be due immediately, and paid pursuant to a schedule to be set by the Court at sentencing. Defendant acknowledges that pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3664(k), he is required to notify the Court and the United States Attorney's Office of any material change in economic circumstances that might affect his ability to pay restitution.

16. Defendant agrees to pay the special assessment of \$100 at the time of sentencing with a cashier's check or money order payable to the Clerk of the U.S. District Court.

17. Defendant agrees that the United States may enforce collection of any fine or restitution imposed in this case pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Sections 3572, 3613, and 3664(m), notwithstanding any payment schedule set by the Court.

Acknowledgments and Waivers Regarding Plea of Guilty

Nature of Agreement

18. This Agreement is entirely voluntary and represents the entire agreement between the Acting United States Attorney and defendant regarding defendant's criminal liability in case 12 CR 50068.

19. This Agreement concerns criminal liability only. Except as expressly set forth in this Agreement, nothing herein shall constitute a limitation, waiver, or release by the United States or any of its agencies of any administrative or judicial civil claim, demand, or cause of action it may have against defendant or any other person or entity. The obligations of this Agreement are limited to the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois and cannot bind any other federal, state, or local prosecuting, administrative, or regulatory authorities, except as expressly set forth in this Agreement.

20. Defendant understands that nothing in this Agreement shall limit the Internal Revenue Service in its collection of any taxes, interest or penalties

from defendant. Defendant understands that the amount of tax as calculated by the IRS may exceed the amount of tax due as calculated for the criminal case.

Waiver of Rights

21. Defendant understands that by pleading guilty he surrenders certain rights, including the following:

a. **Trial rights.** Defendant has the right to persist in a plea of not guilty to the charge against him, and if he does, he would have the right to a public and speedy trial.

i. The trial could be either a jury trial or a trial by the judge sitting without a jury. However, in order that the trial be conducted by the judge sitting without a jury, defendant, the government, and the judge all must agree that the trial be conducted by the judge without a jury.

ii. If the trial is a jury trial, the jury would be composed of twelve citizens from the district, selected at random. Defendant and his attorney would participate in choosing the jury by requesting that the Court remove prospective jurors for cause where actual bias or other disqualification is shown, or by removing prospective jurors without cause by exercising peremptory challenges.

iii. If the trial is a jury trial, the jury would be instructed that defendant is presumed innocent, that the government has the burden of proving defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and that the jury could not convict him unless, after hearing all the evidence, it was persuaded of his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury would have to agree unanimously before it could return a verdict of guilty or not guilty.

iv. If the trial is held by the judge without a jury, the judge would find the facts and determine, after hearing all the evidence, whether or not the judge was persuaded that the government had established defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

v. At a trial, whether by a jury or a judge, the government would be required to present its witnesses and other evidence against defendant. Defendant would be able to confront those government witnesses and his attorney would be able to cross-examine them.

vi. At a trial, defendant could present witnesses and other evidence in his own behalf. If the witnesses for defendant would not appear voluntarily, he could require their attendance through the subpoena power of the Court. A defendant is not required to present any evidence.

vii. At a trial, defendant would have a privilege against self-incrimination so that he could decline to testify, and no inference of guilt

could be drawn from his refusal to testify. If defendant desired to do so, he could testify in his own behalf.

b. **Appellate rights.** Defendant further understands he is waiving all appellate issues that might have been available if he had exercised his right to trial, and may only appeal the validity of this plea of guilty and the sentence imposed. Defendant understands that any appeal must be filed within 14 calendar days of the entry of the judgment of conviction.

c. Defendant understands that by pleading guilty he is waiving all the rights set forth in the prior paragraphs, with the exception of the appellate rights specifically preserved above. Defendant's attorney has explained those rights to him, and the consequences of his waiver of those rights.

Presentence Investigation Report/Post-Sentence Supervision

22. Defendant understands that the United States Attorney's Office in its submission to the Probation Office as part of the Pre-Sentence Report and at sentencing shall fully apprise the District Court and the Probation Office of the nature, scope, and extent of defendant's conduct regarding the charge against him, and related matters. The government will make known all matters in aggravation and mitigation relevant to sentencing.

23. Defendant agrees to truthfully and completely execute a Financial Statement (with supporting documentation) prior to sentencing, to be provided to and shared among the Court, the Probation Office, and the United States Attorney's Office regarding all details of his financial circumstances, including his recent income tax returns as specified by the probation officer. Defendant understands that providing false or incomplete information, or refusing to provide this information, may be used as a basis for denial of a reduction for acceptance of responsibility pursuant to Guideline § 3E1.1 and enhancement of his sentence for obstruction of justice under Guideline § 3C1.1, and may be prosecuted as a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001 or as a contempt of the Court.

24. For the purpose of monitoring defendant's compliance with his obligations to pay a fine and restitution during any term of supervised release or probation to which defendant is sentenced, defendant further consents to the disclosure by the IRS to the Probation Office and the United States Attorney's Office of defendant's individual income tax returns (together with extensions, correspondence, and other tax information) filed subsequent to defendant's sentencing, to and including the final year of any period of supervised release or probation to which defendant is sentenced. Defendant also agrees that a certified copy of this Agreement shall be sufficient evidence

of defendant's request to the IRS to disclose the returns and return information, as provided for in Title 26, United States Code, Section 6103(b).

Other Terms

25. Defendant agrees to cooperate with the United States Attorney's Office in collecting any unpaid fine and restitution for which defendant is liable, including providing financial statements and supporting records as requested by the United States Attorney's Office.

26. Regarding matters relating to the Internal Revenue Service, defendant agrees as follows (nothing in this paragraph, however, precludes defendant from asserting any legal or factual defense to taxes, interest, and penalties that may be assessed by the IRS):

a. Defendant agrees to cooperate with the Internal Revenue Service in any tax examination or audit of defendant which directly or indirectly relates to or arises out of the course of conduct that defendant has acknowledged in this Agreement, by transmitting to the IRS original records or copies thereof, and any additional books and records that the IRS may request.

b. Defendant will not object to a motion brought by the United States Attorney's Office for the entry of an order authorizing disclosure to the Internal Revenue Service of documents, testimony, and related investigative

materials that may constitute grand jury material, preliminary to or in connection with any judicial proceeding, pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 6(e)(3)(E)(i). In addition, defendant will not object to the government's solicitation of consent from third parties who provided records or other materials to the grand jury pursuant to grand jury subpoenas, to turn those materials over to the IRS for use in civil or administrative proceedings or investigations, rather than returning them to the third parties for later summons or subpoena in connection with a civil or administrative proceeding involving, or investigation of, defendant.

Conclusion

27. Defendant understands that this Agreement will be filed with the Court, will become a matter of public record, and may be disclosed to any person.

28. Defendant understands that his compliance with each part of this Agreement extends throughout the period of his sentence, and failure to abide by any term of the Agreement is a violation of the Agreement. Defendant further understands that in the event he violates this Agreement, the government, at its option, may move to vacate the Agreement, rendering it null and void, and thereafter prosecute defendant not subject to any of the limits set forth in this Agreement, or may move to resentence defendant or

require defendant's specific performance of this Agreement. Defendant understands and agrees that in the event that the Court permits defendant to withdraw from this Agreement, or defendant breaches any of its terms and the government elects to void the Agreement and prosecute defendant, any prosecutions that are not time-barred by the applicable statute of limitations on the date of the signing of this Agreement may be commenced against defendant in accordance with this paragraph, notwithstanding the expiration of the statute of limitations between the signing of this Agreement and the commencement of such prosecutions.

29. Should the judge refuse to accept defendant's plea of guilty, this Agreement shall become null and void and neither party will be bound to it.

30. Defendant and his attorney acknowledge that no threats, promises, or representations have been made, nor agreements reached, other than those set forth in this Agreement, to cause defendant to plead guilty.

31. Defendant acknowledges that he has read this Agreement and carefully reviewed each provision with his attorney. Defendant further acknowledges that he understands and voluntarily accepts each and every term and condition of this Agreement.

AGREED THIS DATE: _____

ZACHARY T. FARDON
United States Attorney

JASON BOOTH
Defendant

MICHAEL D. LOVE
Assistant U.S. Attorney

FRANKLIN C. COOK
Attorney for Defendant