

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

FILED
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LA.
OCT 3 11:32

WILLIAM W. ENOVIUS
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CLERK

SECTION: "R"

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA *

v. *

BRANDON HALL *
a/k/a "B-Hilly" *

* * *

FACTUAL BASIS

The above-named defendant, **BRANDON HALL** ("HALL"), has agreed to plead guilty to the Superseding Bill of Information. Should this matter proceed to trial, the United States would prove beyond a reasonable doubt the facts set forth in this Factual Basis. Unless stated otherwise, these acts occurred in the Eastern District of Louisiana:

I. Drug Offenses

During the timeframe of the drug conspiracy, **HALL**, Jonathan LAWRENCE, Dwayne LABRANCH, Aloysius KORIEOCHA, Donald MARCELIN, Brian MAXSON, Lance STOVALL, Vonzo MAGEE, and others, conspired to distribute heroin and fentanyl throughout the New Orleans area. These individuals were members of a drug-trafficking organization that operated primarily in the Eastside Hollygrove neighborhood of New Orleans. Collectively, the group referred to their neighborhood as "The Zoo," a name derived from a popular rap song/video filmed in the neighborhood. Each of the eight defendants has been linked to drug activity in Eastside Hollygrove through law enforcement controlled purchases, Title III wire and electronic interceptions, witness statements, drug seizures, and other evidence. Numerous civilian witnesses, many of whom were customers of **HALL**, LAWRENCE, LABRANCH, KORIEOCHA, MARCELIN, MAXSON, STOVALL, and MAGEE, have provided information about purchasing narcotics from one or more of these defendants.

Between December 2015 and January 2016, agents used a confidential source to conduct four controlled purchases of heroin from LAWRENCE. After the controlled purchases, agents obtained authority from United States District Court Judge Kurt D. Engelhardt to execute two Title III warrants on LAWRENCE's cellular phone. The first interception period was from February 18, 2016, through March 18, 2016, and the second interception period was from April 14, 2016, through April 22, 2016. During both interception periods, agents intercepted numerous phone calls and text messages involving discussions between LAWRENCE and his codefendants in furtherance of their joint drug-trafficking organization.

HALL was intercepted in conversations with LAWRENCE, acting in furtherance of their drug conspiracy. For example, on March 7, 2016, LAWRENCE told HALL that he had customers waiting. HALL responded that he "took care of them," meaning that he sold heroin to the two customers. During another call, on February 24, 2016, HALL complained to LAWRENCE that MARCELIN was getting sloppy because one of LAWRENCE's customers had just approached HALL to purchase heroin.

HALL and his coconspirators were a tight-knit group that worked together to evade law enforcement detection. On March 2, 2016, in a series of intercepted communications, MAXSON told LAWRENCE that he had learned that federal authorities were investigating the drug activities of the group. MAXSON and LAWRENCE agreed to convene members of the conspiracy in Hollygrove to discuss what MAXSON had learned. A subsequent meeting was arranged in Hollygrove with several members of the group. To arrange this meeting, LAWRENCE had contacted a number of the members of the group, including HALL, who attended the meeting.

During the time frame of the drug conspiracy, HALL had a number of customers who would purchase heroin and fentanyl directly from HALL in the Eastside Hollygrove

neighborhood. Text messages from the phone belonging to one of those customers shows frequent communications involving the purchase of eight-ball quantities (or 3.5 grams) of heroin. Numerous other witnesses have stated that **HALL** routinely provided them with various quantities of heroin.

On March 18, 2016, agents set up surveillance in order to monitor drug activity in the Hollygrove neighborhood. During their surveillance, they observed a white Dodge Journey park behind a silver Lexus SUV on Palmetto Avenue in the Eastside Hollygrove neighborhood. The driver of the Lexus exited his car, walked to the driver's side of the Journey, and after a very brief exchange reentered his Lexus and drove away. Agents saw the driver of the Journey and identified him as **HALL**. Agents followed the Lexus and pulled over the driver, Drug User A. Drug User A had a loaded syringe in his hands. Drug User A admitted that he had just purchased \$40 of a substance that he believed was heroin from the individual in the Journey. Drug User A identified a photograph of **HALL** as an individual from whom he had purchased heroin in the past. DEA lab analysis of the substance determined that the substance was .6 grams of fentanyl. Drug User A purchased this fentanyl from **HALL**.

After stopping Drug User A on March 18, 2016, agents continued to conduct surveillance of **HALL**, who was driving the Dodge Journey as he met with other customers. On Cherry Street and Palmetto Avenue in Eastside Hollygrove, agents observed an exchange between a female and the driver of the Dodge Journey. The female, Drug User B, entered a silver Lexus and drove away. Agents conducted a stop on the car that Drug User B was driving. Drug User B admitted that she had just purchased drugs and turned over the substance to law enforcement. DEA lab analysis determined that the substance was .23 grams of fentanyl. Drug User B purchased this fentanyl from **HALL**.

HALL was arrested on April 22, 2016. Agents executed a search warrant on **HALL**'s home, 3410 Livingston Street, at the time of his arrest. Surveillance agents had often seen **HALL** traveling to and from this address. During the search, agents recovered approximately \$16,000 in United States currency. **HALL** possessed the currency, which was proceeds of his illegal drug operation.

HALL and the government stipulate for the purposes of sentencing that **HALL** was responsible for between 400 grams and 700 grams of a mixture or substance containing heroin, through **HALL**'s own conduct and the reasonably foreseeable conduct of his co-conspirators.

II. Firearm Offenses

LAWRENCE, **HALL**, LABRANCH, MAXSON, MAGEE, and others conspired to possess firearms in furtherance of their drug-trafficking activities, and often discussed firearms during intercepted communications. Members of the group were involved in two shootings targeting Victim A, the first of which occurred on March 8, 2016. Victim A was a rival drug dealer who associated with a separate group of individuals that had drug-related disputes with members of LAWRENCE's Eastside Hollygrove group. Victim A was not hit during the March 8, 2016 shooting.

This shooting occurred in front of Mel's Food Store, at the corner of General Ogden and Marks Street in the Hollygrove neighborhood. This store is directly across the street from Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School of Literature & Technology. The discharge of firearms on March 8, 2016, described below, occurred within 1,000 feet of school grounds. The firearms used in this shooting moved in and affected interstate commerce.

On March 7 and March 8, 2016, before the shooting, agents intercepted a number of calls between LAWRENCE, **HALL**, and LABRANCH in furtherance of and to coordinate the

shooting. In one set of calls, LAWRENCE and HALL discussed obtaining WD-40 in order to “clean the rust off” of the firearms that they intended to use in the shooting. In another set of calls on March 7 and March 8, HALL indicated to LAWRENCE that he had obtained a tan Chevrolet Trailblazer. In these calls, the group discussed how they were attempting to hide the Trailblazer, and suggested that they intended to use the Trailblazer for illegal activity. After hearing these calls, agents conducted surveillance in the Hollygrove neighborhood and saw the Trailblazer. Agents determined that the Trailblazer had recently been reported stolen.

On March 8, LABRANCH met with LAWRENCE at LAWRENCE’s residence. LAWRENCE told LABRANCH that he intended to use the stolen Trailblazer to perform a drive-by shooting of Victim A. LAWRENCE asked LABRANCH to act as the driver of the Trailblazer. LABRANCH agreed to drive the Trailblazer in exchange for a small quantity of heroin.

That afternoon, agents established surveillance to observe the Trailblazer, which was parked behind the Costco store, near Palmetto Street in New Orleans. Minutes before the shooting, LAWRENCE and LABRANCH had a phone call where they discussed meeting up. On one call, LAWRENCE asked LABRANCH where he was. LABRANCH stated that he was by the “store,” meaning Mel’s Food Store. LAWRENCE then asked, “He’s out there?” LAWRENCE was referring to Victim A. LABRANCH replied, “Yes.” LAWRENCE then directed LABRANCH to meet by the Trailblazer.

A short time later, LABRANCH went to the Trailblazer and met with LAWRENCE and HALL, who were already in the vehicle. LABRANCH was driving the Trailblazer, and LAWRENCE and HALL were passengers. The plan was for LAWRENCE and HALL to shoot Victim A. LAWRENCE was in possession of an AK firearm, and HALL was in possession of a

black handgun. LABRANCH drove LAWRENCE and HALL to Mel's store, where Victim A was standing. LABRANCH, HALL, and LAWRENCE had covered their faces. LABRANCH was also wearing gloves. LABRANCH pulled down the street and saw Victim A standing next to various people. LABRANCH did a loop around the block. LABRANCH then drove toward the store again, and pulled the Trailblazer next to Victim A. LAWRENCE and HALL exited the car. LAWRENCE and HALL began shooting at Victim A. LABRANCH, LAWRENCE, and HALL then fled the scene.

At approximately 3PM, agents received reports that there had just been a shooting in front of Mel's store. Surveillance video from a pole camera in the neighborhood showed the same tan Trailblazer drive next to the store. Spent casings of four different types of ammunition were recovered from the scene.

In intercepted communications immediately after the shooting, LABRANCH called LAWRENCE and stated, "Yao got grazed." "Yao" is a nickname for another individual who associated with the Eastside Hollygrove group, hereinafter Associate A. In another call approximately an hour and a half after the shooting, LAWRENCE told an unknown male, "Nigga got at Fresh." When the unknown male asked, "Who?" LAWRENCE replied, "You already know." Victim A's nickname is "Fresh."

Over the course of the afternoon, numerous individuals, including HALL, informed LAWRENCE that they should not go into the neighborhood because police were there investigating the shooting. On March 9, 2016, in an intercepted call between LAWRENCE and HALL, HALL told LAWRENCE that HALL would have to get LAWRENCE a new "stick," and that the one he had was "whammy." LAWRENCE responded that "it hit like eight." The term "stick" is slang for a rifle. HALL referred to the rifle as "whammy," meaning that it was not a

well-functioning gun. When LAWRENCE stated that “it hit like eight,” he meant that he believed the gun discharged at least eight times.

The second shooting occurred on April 16, 2016, at the intersection of Monroe Street and Airline Highway. The firearms used in this shooting moved in and affected interstate commerce. LAWRENCE saw that Victim A had traveled into the Eastside Hollygrove neighborhood that day. LAWRENCE alerted HALL, who was also in the neighborhood. LAWRENCE and HALL agreed to attempt to kill Victim A again. HALL left LAWRENCE and went home to prepare. At 5:20pm, LAWRENCE called HALL, who was still at home. LAWRENCE was in a hurry. HALL told LAWRENCE that he was getting his “gear,” meaning his clothes and firearm. LAWRENCE responded that HALL was taking too long and “that man [*i.e.*, Victim A] will be gone.”

In a text exchange before the shooting, LAWRENCE texted Associate A: “FRESH.” As noted, “Fresh” is a nickname for Victim A. Associate A responded, “No cuz just do it better, that’s all.” In this text, Associate A, who was “grazed” during the first attempt to shoot Victim A, was wishing LAWRENCE success on the second attempt to shoot Victim A.

LAWRENCE and an individual named “Wayne” picked up HALL in a stolen Suburban near HALL’s home. LAWRENCE and HALL had their faces covered. Wayne was driving. The three men drove towards where they had seen Victim A in front of Mel’s Store. The men saw Victim A enter his car and drive to the intersection of Monroe Street and Airline Highway, where he stopped at a red light. Victim A’s friend was parked in a separate car behind Victim A. The Suburban pulled alongside Victim A’s car. HALL and LAWRENCE were both in the back seat of the Suburban. The back-passenger side window, on LAWRENCE’s side of the car, did not roll down completely. HALL used a barbell to break the window and LAWRENCE began shooting

out of the Suburban at Victim A, who was by himself in his car. LAWRENCE stopped, and HALL began shooting out of the same window at Victim A. In the course of the shooting, LAWRENCE was shot in the finger.

At approximately 6:30PM, police were alerted to a shooting at Peach Street and Monroe Street. A car linked to Victim A had been left at the scene. Police located a gun inside the vehicle. Victim A's friend had transported Victim A to University Hospital with a gunshot wound to his leg.

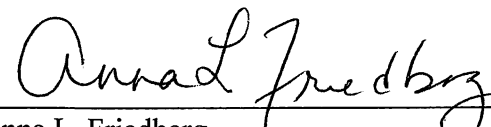
In calls intercepted after the shooting, LAWRENCE attempted to regroup with members of the Eastside Hollygrove group. In one call, an unidentified male asked LAWRENCE, "You hit him Mego?" "Mego" is a nickname for LAWRENCE. In another call, LAWRENCE told an associate that he was accidentally shot by "Hilly," a nickname for HALL. Shell casings from at least two different firearms were collected at the scene, including rifle shell casings with the same manufacturer as in the March 8 shooting.

Limited Nature of Factual Basis


This proffer of evidence is not intended to constitute a complete statement of all facts, but rather is a minimum statement of facts intended to prove the necessary factual predicate for the guilty plea. The limited purpose of this proffer is to demonstrate that there exists a sufficient legal basis for **HALL's** plea of guilty to the charged offense.


Brandon S. Long
Assistant United States Attorney

10/3/18
(Date)


Anna L. Friedberg
Counsel for Defendant Brandon Hall

10-3-18
(Date)


Brandon Hall
Defendant

10-3-18
(Date)