

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**

|                                 |           |                            |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| <b>UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</b> | *         | <b>CRIMINAL NO: 18-081</b> |
| v.                              | *         | <b>SECTION: "F"</b>        |
| <b>TEKA LAFRANCE</b>            | *         |                            |
|                                 | *   *   * |                            |

**FACTUAL BASIS**

The above-named defendant, **TEKA LAFRANCE** ("**LAFRANCE**"), has agreed to plead guilty to Count One of the Indictment. Should this matter proceed to trial, the United States would prove beyond a reasonable doubt, through credible testimony, drug evidence, consensual recordings, Title III wire and electronic interceptions, and other reliable evidence, the following facts. Unless stated otherwise, these acts occurred in the Eastern District of Louisiana:

During the timeframe of the charged conspiracy, **LAFRANCE** conspired with Jorge ORNELAS, and others, to distribute cocaine in the Eastern District of Louisiana. The evidence shows that **LAFRANCE** was supplied quantities of cocaine hydrochloride (*i.e.*, powder cocaine) by ORNELAS.

In October 2015, a Drug Enforcement Administration Confidential Source (CS-3) told agents that CS-3 had been a New Orleans-based kilogram-level cocaine dealer who was supplied powder cocaine from **LAFRANCE** and ORNELAS. CS-3 explained that he previously had received cocaine from ORNELAS. In October of 2015, ORNELAS and **LAFRANCE** partnered up and **LAFRANCE** became one of ORNELAS's New Orleans-based cocaine distributors. CS-3 explained that ORNELAS would "front" the cocaine to **LAFRANCE**. ORNELAS would then drive to New Orleans to pick up the money (or was with an associate) after **LAFRANCE** had sold the kilograms of cocaine. After ORNELAS became **LAFRANCE**'s source of supply, CS-3

began purchasing cocaine directly from **LAFRANCE**. CS-3 explained that **LAFRANCE** charged her customers approximately \$32,000 for a kilogram of cocaine in New Orleans.

**Communications Between CS-3 and LAFRANCE/ORNELAS, and Surveillance**

Based in part on information provided by CS-3, including phone numbers for **LAFRANCE** and **ORNELAS**, agents obtained a warrant authorizing GPS tracking on **ORNELAS**'s phone. On November 1, 2015, agents tracked **ORNELAS** as he traveled from his home in the Houston, Texas area, to the home of **LAFRANCE** in New Orleans (1735 Shirley Drive, New Orleans). Agents conducting surveillance of **LAFRANCE**'s residence watched **ORNELAS** arrive in a maroon Chevrolet Suburban. **LAFRANCE** exited her house carrying a blue bag, entered **ORNELAS**'s Suburban, stayed for a brief period of time, and then walked back into her home empty-handed. Agents then saw the Suburban back into **LAFRANCE**'s driveway and under a carport. **ORNELAS** and an unindicted coconspirator connected a trailer to the Suburban. On the trailer was a white Chevy sedan. **ORNELAS** and the unindicted coconspirator then departed **LAFRANCE**'s residence and drove back to **ORNELAS**'s body shop in Houston. As described below, agents frequently observed variations of this routine over the next several months.

On November 25, 2015, CS-3 placed a recorded phone call to **ORNELAS**. During this recorded call, **ORNELAS** stated, "I'm trying, I'm trying to go maybe Friday down there." CS-3 replied, "Friday?" **ORNELAS** replied, "Yeah, Yeah." CS-3 told **ORNELAS**, "Sounds good, you killing us." **ORNELAS** stated, "I hit a little bit problems right here though." CS-3 told **ORNELAS**, "you killing us, you killing us we waiting on you baby." **ORNELAS** replied, "Yeah, yeah I'll see you, I'll see you." In this call, CS-3 was asking for a resupply of cocaine, and **ORNELAS** was stating that he would try to travel to New Orleans that Friday to provide the cocaine hydrochloride.

On December 8, 2015, CS-3 advised law enforcement that **LAFRANCE** had cocaine for

sale. CS-3 wore an audio recording device and visited **LAFRANCE** at her Shirley Drive residence. There, **LAFRANCE** told CS-3 that, on the previous day, she had received a kilogram of cocaine from another supplier, not ORNELAS. **LAFRANCE** said that ORNELAS's primary source of supply had recently been "popped three times" attempting to smuggle quantities of cocaine across the Mexican border. **LAFRANCE** stated her knowledge that ORNELAS's main source of supply was a woman residing in Mexico. **LAFRANCE** told CS-3 that she had nine ounces remaining from the previous day's kilogram supply, and that she intended to charge \$8,500 for the nine ounces. **LAFRANCE** also stated that, when ORNELAS made his next delivery, she would like CS-3 to teach her how to "cut" her cocaine supply.

On January 5, 2016, law enforcement performed a license plate reader query of the maroon Chevrolet Suburban that surveillance agents had seen at **LAFRANCE**'s residence on November 1, 2015. Agents learned that the Suburban was traveling east through Lafayette and was towing a car haul trailer. After ORNELAS arrived, agents conducted surveillance of ORNELAS and observed him and another male in the area of the Deluxe Inn, located at 48 Westbank Expressway, Gretna. Thus, agents knew that ORNELAS was in town.

Later that day, CS-3 contacted law enforcement to advise that **LAFRANCE** had received a resupply of cocaine from ORNELAS. Toll records showed that **LAFRANCE** had been in contact with ORNELAS that morning. CS-3 then wore an audio recording device and visited **LAFRANCE** at her Shirley Drive residence. During their meeting, **LAFRANCE** told CS-3, "I have one for you." **LAFRANCE** stated that ORNELAS had recently changed suppliers. **LAFRANCE** then received a phone call from an unknown person, whom she identified as a "new customer." CS-3 left the residence shortly thereafter.

On January 6, 2016, CS-3 conducted a controlled purchase of nine ounces of cocaine from

**LAFRANCE** at her residence, 1735 Shirley Drive. In furtherance of this buy, CS-3 had placed a recorded telephone call to **LAFRANCE** to negotiate the purchase of the nine ounces. During this recorded call, CS-3 told **LAFRANCE**, “Teka, I know you’re in a rush, go ahead and um break it down to nine”—meaning nine ounces of cocaine hydrochloride. Around the same time as the call, agents established surveillance in the vicinity of 1735 Shirley Drive. Agents outfitted CS-3 with an audio recorder and \$7,750.00 DEA Official Advanced Funds (OAF). CS-3 went to **LAFRANCE**’s residence and met with **LAFRANCE**. While inside, CS-3 exchanged \$7,750.00 for nine ounces of cocaine hydrochloride. Lab results confirmed that the drugs were cocaine hydrochloride and weighed 247 grams. During the meeting, **LAFRANCE** told CS-3 that **ORNELAS** supplied the cocaine. **LAFRANCE** stated that **ORNELAS** was still in New Orleans, and was waiting for **LAFRANCE** to finish selling her cocaine so that he could take the drug proceeds back to Texas.

On January 7, 2016, agents performing surveillance of **LAFRANCE**’s residence saw **ORNELAS** back into the driveway in the same maroon Suburban. After approximately 30 minutes, the Suburban departed the residence and traveled back to Houston.

On January 13, 2016, CS-3 informed law enforcement that **ORNELAS** had arrived in New Orleans to bring **LAFRANCE** cocaine. Law enforcement checked pole camera footage from the area in front of **LAFRANCE**’s residence, and observed **ORNELAS**’s maroon Suburban back into **LAFRANCE**’s driveway under the carport, stay for approximately forty minutes, then depart. Later that evening, the pole camera footage showed that **ORNELAS** went back to **LAFRANCE**’s residence, pulled into the driveway, and then departed after a few minutes and began heading back to Texas. This was consistent with **ORNELAS**’s practice of fronting cocaine to **LAFRANCE**, waiting for the cocaine to be sold, and then traveling back to Texas with the proceeds.

In the meantime, on March 23, 2016, then-United States District Judge Kurt D. Engelhardt authorized the Title III interception of phone calls and text messages over **LAFRANCE's** phone. Interception was initiated on March 28, 2016. During the course of the Title III interceptions on **LAFRANCE's** telephone, numerous drug-related telephone calls were intercepted between **LAFRANCE** and ORNELAS. These calls provided evidence that **LAFRANCE** was receiving quantities of cocaine from ORNELAS for subsequent distribution.

**Excerpts of Intercepted LAFRANCE Communications with ORNELAS**

On April 7, 2016, agents intercepted an incoming telephone call from ORNELAS to **LAFRANCE** on **LAFRANCE's** phone. During this call, **LAFRANCE** told ORNELAS, "Slow motion man," suggesting that the cocaine was selling slowly. **LAFRANCE** then told ORNELAS "probably hopefully Monday or Tuesday," meaning that she would probably be ready for ORNELAS to pick up the money in a few days. Later that day, **LAFRANCE** and ORNELAS had another phone conversation, during which ORNELAS asked **LAFRANCE**, "You don't know what the number is you have for me?" During this call, ORNELAS was asking **LAFRANCE** how much money she had to give to him.

On April 8, 2016, agents received information that ORNELAS was traveling from Houston to New Orleans. Agents established surveillance on ORNELAS. ORNELAS traveled to a motel in the New Orleans area and called **LAFRANCE**. **LAFRANCE** stated that she was at home. ORNELAS and an unindicted coconspirator drove to **LAFRANCE's** residence on Shirley Drive. As ORNELAS arrived, the Title-III intercept on **LAFRANCE's** telephone captured an outgoing telephone call to ORNELAS. During this call, **LAFRANCE** instructed ORNELAS go to another residence due to the amount of people at the house next door to **LAFRANCE's** residence. Agents followed ORNELAS to 1445 Shirley Drive, which is an abandoned property a few blocks away.

Agents then observed **LAFRANCE** exit 1735 Shirley Drive while carrying a pink book sack and a blue bag. **LAFRANCE** entered her car and traveled to 1445 Shirley Drive to meet with **ORNELAS**. After meeting with **ORNELAS**, **LAFRANCE** traveled back to 1735 Shirley Drive. Agents observed **LAFRANCE** exit her car carrying the pink book sack and enter 1735 Shirley Drive.

On April 20, 2016, the Title-III intercept on **LAFRANCE**'s telephone captured an outgoing telephone call to **ORNELAS**. During this call, **ORNELAS** told **LAFRANCE**, "I'm waiting for these guys. They are supposed to be here today." **LAFRANCE** told **ORNELAS** that she would soon be leaving town to go on a cruise. **ORNELAS** then asked **LAFRANCE** if he could send someone else to "pick up what you got," meaning drug proceeds. **LAFRANCE** agreed and told **ORNELAS** that she would be leaving to go out of town the following day at approximately noon.

On April 21, 2016, agents received information that **ORNELAS** was traveling from Houston to New Orleans. Agents established surveillance on **ORNELAS** and an unindicted coconspirator as they drove through Kenner, and followed **ORNELAS** directly to Shirley Drive. **ORNELAS** and **LAFRANCE** agreed to meet again at 1445 Shirley Drive, where **ORNELAS** parked in the rear yard area of the residence. **LAFRANCE** walked from her residence to meet with **ORNELAS**. After a one-minute meeting with **LAFRANCE**, **ORNELAS** began traveling back to Texas.

#### **Search Warrant on LAFRANCE's Residence**

On June 10, 2016, CS-3 contacted **LAFRANCE** to discuss when **ORNELAS** would be delivering her cocaine. During this telephone call, **LAFRANCE** indicated that **ORNELAS** was in Mexico attempting to obtain cocaine from his source of supply. **LAFRANCE** anticipated that

ORNELAS would be delivering the cocaine in approximately one week.

On June 16, 2016, CS-3 made contact with **LAFRANCE** to discuss the status of ORNELAS delivering her cocaine. **LAFRANCE** stated that she spoke to ORNELAS on June 14, 2016 and that ORNELAS was still in Mexico attempting to obtain cocaine from his source of supply. Additionally, **LAFRANCE** stated that she expected ORNELAS to deliver the cocaine as early as June 16, 2016.

On June 29, 2016, CS-3 placed a recorded phone call to ORNELAS. During this call, ORNELAS stated that he was trying to obtain more cocaine. Specifically, ORNELAS stated, "We are trying, we are trying this week." CS-3 replied, "This week?" Later in the conversation, ORNELAS stated, "Teka is calling me too." ORNELAS stated, "I'm gonna try this week, I'm gonna try this week, I'm working it, I'm working it."

On July 27, 2016, a license plate reader intercepted ORNELAS's Suburban traveling to New Orleans. Agents set up surveillance at **LAFRANCE**'s residence, and saw ORNELAS arrive and back into the driveway under the carport. **LAFRANCE** and ORNELAS met at the residence. At the direction of law enforcement, CS-3 called **LAFRANCE** and asked whether **LAFRANCE** had been resupplied. **LAFRANCE** stated that she expected to be resupplied possibly the following day—which was not true, because ORNELAS was in the process of resupplying **LAFRANCE** during his visit.

Later that afternoon, agents executed a search warrant at 1735 Shirley Drive. **LAFRANCE** and her three-year-old son were home at the time. Agents secured **LAFRANCE** and read her *Miranda* rights. **LAFRANCE** agreed to speak with the agents. **LAFRANCE** initially denied any knowledge of illegal activities. **LAFRANCE** identified the upstairs bedroom as her own. In the course of the search of the bedroom, which was locked and had to be breached, agents recovered

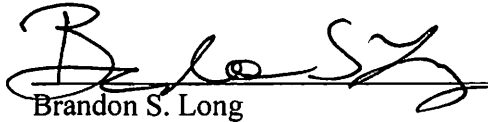
a large amount of marijuana and two gallon-sized Ziploc bags containing approximately one kilogram of cocaine hydrochloride. In the kitchen agents recovered numerous used plastic wrappings consistent with those that had been used to package kilogram quantities of cocaine hydrochloride. Upon being confronted with this evidence, **LAFRANCE** stated, “You got me dead right.” Agents advised **LAFRANCE** that they were aware that her cocaine supplier had visited her residence earlier in the day, to which she asked, “Well, why didn’t you come in here when you knew he was here dropping it off?”

**LAFRANCE** and the government stipulate for the purposes of sentencing that **LAFRANCE** was responsible for at least 5 kilograms but less than 15 kilograms of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine hydrochloride, through **LAFRANCE**’s own conduct and the reasonably foreseeable conduct of her co-conspirators.

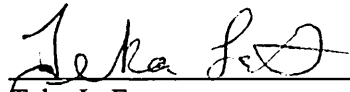


Limited Nature of Factual Basis

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 **LAFRANCE**'s plea of guilty to the charged offense.

 7/31/19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)  
Brandon S. Long  
Assistant United States Attorney

 7/31/19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)  
Rachel Yazbeck  
Counsel for Defendant Teka LaFrance

 7-31-19  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)  
Teka LaFrance  
Defendant