

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

* CRIMINAL NO. 20-0121

v.

* SECTION: "R"

JEFFREY GITTE

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FACTUAL BASIS

The defendant, Jeffrey Gitte, has agreed to plead guilty to Counts 1 and 2 of the Indictment, which charges him with participating in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine hydrochloride, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(B), and 846. He has also agreed to plead guilty to trying to escape from federal custody, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 751(a).

Should this matter have gone to trial, the Government would have proven, through the introduction of competent testimony and other admissible evidence, the following facts, beyond a reasonable doubt, to support the allegations against the defendant:

COUNTS 1 and 2:

In October of 2020, DEA [REDACTED] [REDACTED] received information from a reliable, confidential source (hereafter referred to as CS) concerning two hispanic males later identified as Jeffrey GITTE and Fausto CASTILLO. According to this CS, on or about October 4, 2020, the CS met GITTE and CASTILLO in New Orleans, Louisiana. During this meeting, GITTE and CASTILLO informed the CS that they could sell the CS kilogram quantities of cocaine. The CS

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and GITTE exchanged telephone numbers with the intention of conducting a cocaine transaction in the near future.

On or about October 8, 2020, GITTE placed a FaceTime call to the CS. According to the CS, during this call, GITTE displayed three kilograms of cocaine to the CS. Furthermore, according to the CS, GITTE wanted the CS to travel to Miami, Florida, to see the cocaine. According to the CS, during this call, he requested 10 kilograms of cocaine from GITTE. According to the CS, GITTE agreed to sell the CS the 10 kilograms of cocaine.

On October 11, 2020, the CS placed a recorded FaceTime call to GITTE. During this call, GITTE assured the CS that he had cocaine for sale.

On October 14, 2020, the CS placed a recorded FaceTime call to CASTILLO. During this call, CASTILLO discussed the quality of the cocaine he had for sale. CASTILLO and the CS made tentative arrangements to meet in the New Orleans area on October 18, 2020. CASTILLO told the CS to recommend a high-end hotel for the cocaine transaction to take place. CASTILLO indicated that the CS would only be dealing with him and GITTE during this ensuing transaction. The CS and CASTILLO agreed on \$37,000 per kilogram. The CS sent CASTILLO a text message informing him to go to the New Orleans Marriot Metairie at Lakeway, located at 3838 North Causeway Blvd. Metairie, LA.

On October 18, 2020, the CS placed a recorded FaceTime call to GITTE. During this call, GITTE called CASTILLO on FaceTime on a separate telephone. During this call, CASTILLO told the CS that he was delayed and wouldn't be arriving in New Orleans until October 21, 2020.

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On October 21, 2020, the CS placed a recorded FaceTime call to CASTILLO. During this call, CASTILLO confirmed that he was on his way to New Orleans and would arrive at the New Orleans Marriot Metairie at Lakeway, located at 3838 North Causeway Blvd. Metairie, LA at approximately 5:00 p.m.

At this time, members of the DEA, New Orleans Field Division established surveillance at the New Orleans Marriot Metairie at Lakeway located at 3838 North Causeway Blvd., Metairie, LA. At approximately 5:12 p.m., surveillance observed GITTE and CASTILLO arrive at the Marriott driving a white Cadillac Escalade. Surveillance observed CASTILLO and GITTE at the front desk of the hotel. Agents learned CASTILLO rented room [REDACTED]. Shortly after CASTILLO rented a room, he contacted the CS and informed the CS that he was at the Marriott. Meanwhile, surveillance observed GITTE and a Hispanic female later identified as Ashley Benitez, enter the hotel elevators. Agents learned that Benitez rented room [REDACTED].

At this time, agents met the CS and equipped him with an audio recording device. Agents also provided the CS with a digital scale. Agents then instructed the CS to travel to the Marriott and meet CASTILLO. The CS then traveled to the Marriott and made contact with CASTILLO and began discussing the ensuing cocaine transaction. The CS and CASTILLO then walked into the hotel and entered Room [REDACTED]. Shortly thereafter, surveillance observed a Hispanic female later identified as Katia ALMANZAR-TEJADA arrive in the Marriott Valet parking area, driving a black Chrysler 300. Surveillance observed ALMANZAR-TEJADA retrieve two pink suitcases from the Chrysler 300. Surveillance observed ALMANZAR-TEJADA approach the Cadillac Escalade and begin talking to one of the occupants in the rear-passenger seat. Surveillance then observed ALMANZAR-TEJADA walk to the front desk of the hotel. Agents learned that

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ALMANZAR-TEJADA rented room [REDACTED]. Surveillance observed ALMANZAR-TEJADA enter the hotel elevator.

Meanwhile, while inside room [REDACTED], the CS and CASTILLO discussed the transaction. GITTE then entered room [REDACTED]. The CS, CASTILLO and GITTE then began discussing the ensuing cocaine transaction. At this time, CASTILLO departed the room to retrieve a sample of the cocaine. Shortly thereafter, CASTILLO departed the room to retrieve the cocaine to show to the CS. Shortly thereafter, according to the CS, CASTILLO reentered room [REDACTED] with one, black-rectangle package containing suspected cocaine. According to the CS, CASTILLO used a knife and opened the kilogram package. The CS then determined the package contained suspected cocaine. The CS then told CASTILLO that he would go get the money (\$370,000.00) for the 10 kilograms and would return shortly. The CS then departed room [REDACTED] and exited the hotel.

At this time, agents maintained surveillance on rooms [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. While in the hallway near room [REDACTED], surveillance observed GITTE exit room [REDACTED]. Upon exiting the room, GITTE observed law enforcement clad in law enforcement vests and insignia. At this time, agents identified themselves and arrested GITTE. Prior to arresting GITTE, GITTE began knocking on room [REDACTED], attempting to alert the occupants of police presence. Agents elected to enter room [REDACTED]. Upon doing so, agents came in contact with CASTILLO and ALMANZAR-TEJADA. While placing CASTILLO and ALMANZAR-TEJADA into custody, agents observed numerous kilograms of suspected cocaine on the dresser of the hotel room. These suspected kilograms were in plain view. At this time, agents exited room [REDACTED], and entered rooms [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to ensure there were no additional suspects in these rooms. Agents did not locate any additional suspects.

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in rooms [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] CASTILLO, ALMANZAR-TEJADA, and GITTE were each, individually, read their Miranda rights.

Meanwhile, agents came into contact with two occupants of the Cadillac Escalade, identified as Benitez and Antonio Alcantara Luciano.

At this time, agents asked CASTILLO for permission to search room [REDACTED]. CASTILLO agreed and signed a Consent to Search form for room [REDACTED]. CASTILLO told agents that the items inside the room were fake cocaine. CASTILLO stated that he would place small amounts of real cocaine into the fake kilogram bricks and rip off potential buyers of the cocaine. Agents then asked ALMANZAR-TEJADA for permission to search room [REDACTED]. ALMANZAR-TEJADA agreed and signed a Consent to Search form for room [REDACTED]. Agents then asked Benitez for permission to search room [REDACTED]. Benitez agreed and signed a Consent to Search form for room [REDACTED].

At this time, agents began searching room [REDACTED]. Upon searching, agents located the following items:

- One black-rectangle package containing a white-powdery substance weighing approximately 1125 gross grams. This package was located on the nightstand between the beds in the room. This suspected cocaine was field tested, which revealed a **positive** response for the presence of cocaine.
- Approximately 34 gross grams of a white-powdery substance, suspected to be cocaine. This suspected cocaine was field tested, which revealed a **positive** response for the presence of cocaine.
- One black-rectangle package containing a white-powdery substance weighing approximately 1155 gross grams. This package was located inside a beige-cloth bag on the main dresser of the room. This suspected cocaine was field tested, which revealed a **positive** response for the presence of cocaine.
- Nine black-rectangle packages each containing a white-powdery substance weighing approximately 9100 gross grams. This package was located on the main dresser of the room. This suspected cocaine was field tested, which revealed a **negative** response for the presence of cocaine.

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- Approximately 50 gross grams of suspected marijuana, located inside ALMANZAR-TEJADA'S purse.
- Two pink suitcases that surveillance previously observed in ALMANZAR-TEJADA'S possession.
- Plastic wrapping, tape, and two knives used to package narcotics.

At this time, agents began searching room [REDACTED]. Upon searching, agents located the following items:

- One digital scale which was previously provided to the CS by agents.

At this time, agents began searching room [REDACTED]. Upon searching, agents did not locate any contraband.

After the arrest of the subjects, D.E.A. agents conducted a post-arrest interview of CASTILLO. CASTILLO was again advised of his Miranda Rights. CASTILLO stated that he understood his rights and voluntarily waived his right to remain silent. During this interview, CASTILLO admitted meeting the CS in New Orleans, Louisiana. CASTILLO indicated that he and GITTE both communicated with the CS. CASTILLO stated that he and GITTE intended to sell the CS 10 kilograms of cocaine for \$37,000 per kilogram. CASTILLO indicated that he departed New York on October 20, 2020. CASTILLO stated that he purchased the fake kilogram packages for \$500.00 from an unknown individual in New York. CASTILLO stated that he, GITTE, Benitez, and Luciano drove from New York to New Orleans in the Cadillac Escalade. CASTILLO stated he purchased approximately 30 grams of cocaine from an unknown individual in New York. CASTILLO indicated that the 11 kilogram packages came in the other vehicle. CASTILLO would not give details on who drove the 11 kilogram packages to New Orleans. CASTILLO indicated that Benitez and Luciano were not involved. CASTILLO stated that while he and the CS were in the hotel room, he showed the CS a package containing a sample of the cocaine. According to CASTILLO, after the CS departed room [REDACTED], he and GITTE entered

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room [REDACTED] to begin packaging the drugs. CASTILLO detailed that he has ripped off numerous drug dealers in the past by selling them fake drugs. CASTILLO indicated has successfully sold people fake drugs in the past, in which he profited approximately \$50,000.

Agents also conducted a post-arrest interview of ALMANZAR-TEJADA. ALMANZAR-TEJADA was again advised of her Miranda Rights. ALMANZAR-TEJADA stated that she understood her rights and voluntarily waived her right to remain silent. During this interview, ALMANZAR-TEJADA stated that she transported the kilogram packages from New York to New Orleans. ALMANZAR-TEJADA stated that CASTILLO provided her with the 11 kilogram packages and instructed her to travel to the Marriott hotel. ALMANZAR-TEJADA stated that CASTILLO gave her the kilogram packages in New York. ALMANZAR-TEJADA indicated that CASTILLO was going to pay her \$5,000 to transport the kilograms. ALMANZAR-TEJADA stated that while inside room [REDACTED], she physically touched the kilogram packages. ALMANZAR-TEJADA indicated the kilogram packages were inside the two pink suitcases.

CASTILLO, GITTE, and ALMANZAR-TEJADA were placed into holding cells at the D.E.A. New Orleans Field Division office. CASTILLO and GITTE managed to escape their respective holding cells and flee on foot. They descended approximately 17 flights of stairs, while handcuffed and exited the building. After learning of this escape, law enforcement quickly apprehended CASTILLO and GITTE approximately a quarter mile from the D.E.A. New Orleans Office. CASTILLO, GITTE, and ALMANZAR-TEJADA were then transported to the Saint Charles Parish Jail and booked accordingly on federal charges.

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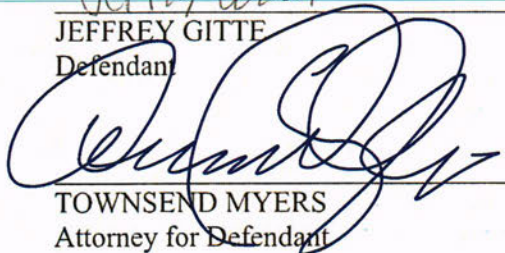
This proffer of evidence is not intended to constitute a complete statement of all facts, but rather is a minimum statement of facts intended to prove the necessary factual predicate for the guilty plea. The limited purpose of this proffer is to demonstrate that there exists a sufficient legal basis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


MAURICE E. LANDRIEU, JR.
Assistant United States Attorney

3/5/21
Date


JEFFREY GITTE
Defendant

3/2/21
Date


TOWNSEND MYERS
Attorney for Defendant

3/2/21
Date