

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

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA * **CRIMINAL NO: 20-16**
v. * **SECTION: "D"**
BLAKE MONROE *

* * *

FACTUAL BASIS

The above-named defendant, Blake Monroe ("MONROE"), has agreed to plead guilty to Counts 1 and 2 of the Superseding Bill of Information in the above captioned case. Should this matter proceed to trial, the United States would prove beyond a reasonable doubt, through credible testimony, Title III wire and electronic interceptions, videos, physical surveillance, seizures of money, drugs, and firearms, and other reliable evidence, the following facts. Unless stated otherwise, these acts occurred in the Eastern District of Louisiana:

December 11, 2019 arrest of MONROE

On December 11, 2019, at approximately noon, two NOPD officers were conducting undercover surveillance at the corner of Chef Menteur Highway and Werner Drive in New Orleans East. These two NOPD officers had been assisting on the joint DEA-NOPD investigation of MONROE, and others for distributing illegal drugs in New Orleans East. The NOPD officers observed a white Mercedes drive up to this corner and then stop. They then watched a man, known as being addicted to crack, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt approach the vehicle and conduct a suspected hand-to-hand purchase of illegal narcotics from the driver. The white Mercedes was known by the two NOPD officers conducting surveillance to be registered to MONROE's uncle.

AUSA DHJ
Defendant BSM
Defense Counsel SC

This information was relayed to other NOPD officers who then conducted a traffic stop on the white Mercedes. These NOPD officers approached the white Mercedes and had the driver, later identified as MONROE, and a female passenger, girlfriend K.S., exit the car because of safety concerns. Officers new that MONROE had a reputation for being armed and dangerous and he did not stop his Mercedes when initially told to do so by NOPD officers. Instead, MONROE crossed Chef Menteur Highway before eventually parking in an apartment complex located on the other side of the highway. When asked, both MONROE and K.S. said that there were no firearms in the vehicle.

An NOPD officer, however, observed in plain sight suspected marijuana crumb and an AK-47 Draco assault weapon (serial number DR-4768-17R0), with a high-capacity magazine (30 rounds), partially covered by a black coat on the back floor. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed two digital scales, both with white residue. One scale was in the compartment on the driver's door and the other scale was under the front passenger's seat. A search incident to arrest revealed that MONROE was in possession of more than \$3000.00 in various denominations and MONROE's girlfriend in possession of more than \$600 in various denominations.

A female witness to MONROE's crack sale that afternoon on the corner of Chef Menteur Highway and Werner Drive told NOPD officers in a recorded statement that she had watched a man in a black hooded sweatshirt approach the Mercedes and purchase what she believed were drugs from the driver. The NOPD officers then spoke with the man who had just purchased drugs from MONROE. In a recorded statement, this man confirmed that he "bought a \$5.00 rock from the guy driving the white car." When asked where this "rock" of crack cocaine was, the man said that he "smoked it."

While MONROE was being booked at Central Lock Up that afternoon, he was thoroughly searched by Sheriff Deputies. During this search deputies found a plastic bag hidden in MONROE's crotch area that contained approximately 25 grams of crack cocaine. A field test and later a DEA drug test confirmed the contents of MONROE's bag as cocaine base ("crack").

LIONEL COOLEY discusses the AK-47 firearm seized from MONROE

On December 19, 2019, COOLEY discussed the firearm in a call that was being recoded pursuant to a court order. The following is an excerpt from this call:

COOLEY: I FORGOT, BOY I AIN'T KNOW BLAKE-O GOT CAUGHT WITH THE DRACO.
H.K.: YEAH? WHAT HE BACK IN JAIL?
COOLEY: NO, I'M SAYING THAT'S WHAT HE GOT CAUGHT WITH.
H.K.: OH ALRIGHT.
COOLEY: YEAH. THAT'S WHY ALL THAT ATTENTION WAS ON IT. WE'RE LIKE WHAT THE FUCK. THAT'S WHY.
H.K.: OH YOU JUST TALKED HIM?
COOLEY: I TALKED TO HIM THIS MORNING. HE SAY HE GONNA GIVE ME ANOTHER ONE. I WAS LIKE, I SAID BOY WHAT YOU TALKING? BOY THAT DRACO THAT'S WHAT I GOT. HE SAID YOU AIN'T KNOW THAT I SAID NO. NOW THAT'S WHY ALL THAT ATTENTION WAS ON YOU LIKE THAT. I ASKED HIM WHAT THE FUCK YOU DOING RIDING AROUND WITH A DRACO. ERNEST IS GONNA TAKE, ERNEST GONNA SAY HE LEFT IT IN THE CAR. THAT'S ERNEST'S GUN. THEY GONNA GIVE IT BACK TO ERNEST. THEY SHOULD.
H.K.: YEAH. YEAP.
COOLEY: I SAID SHIT NO BODIES ON THERE OR NOTHING. YEAH I'MA HIT YOU UP IN A MINUTE.
H.K.: ALRIGHT.

A search of MONROE's criminal record shows that he has two prior felony convictions for crimes of violence. MONROE pled guilty to both of the crimes listed below. He was represented by counsel and was aware that he could not legally possess a firearm after obtaining these convictions.

1) a conviction in Orleans Parish Criminal District Court, case number 517896, where he pled guilty on March 17, 2014, to the crime of Domestic Abuse Battery by Strangulation, in violation of LA R.S. 14:35.3(L), and

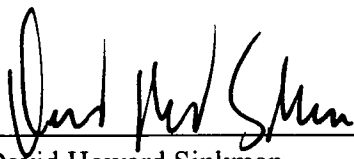
2) a conviction in Orleans Parish Criminal District Court, case number 527076, where he pled guilty on November 3, 2017, to Second Degree Battery, in violation of LA R.S. 14:34.1.

Furthermore, the AK-47 Draco assault weapon (serial number DR-4768-17R0), with a high-capacity magazine (30 rounds) that was located in the backseat of MONROE's vehicle on December 11, 2019 was not manufactured in the State of Louisiana, and therefore, to be possessed in Louisiana on this date had to have travelled in and affected interstate commerce.

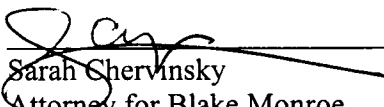
The Government and MONROE stipulate and agree that MONROE should be held accountable for possessing with intent to distribute at least 22.4 G but less than 28 G of cocaine base ("crack") on December 11, 2019, and for being a felon in possession of a firearm that day.

Limited Nature of Factual Basis

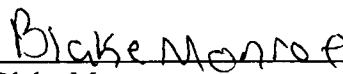
This proffer of evidence is not intended to constitute a complete statement of all facts, but rather is a minimum statement of facts intended to prove the necessary factual predicate for the guilty plea. The limited purpose of this proffer is to demonstrate that there exists a sufficient legal basis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



David Howard Sinkman (Date) 11-2-2021
Assistant United States Attorney



Sarah Chervinsky (Date) 11/2/21
Attorney for Blake Monroe



Blake Monroe (Date) 11-2-21
Defendant