

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
AUGUSTA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)
 v.) CR: 120-103
)
SONYA BARNES)
)

PLEA AGREEMENT

Defendant Sonya Barnes, represented by her counsel John E. Price, and the United States of America, represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Patrick J. Schwedler and Jonathan A. Porter, have reached a plea agreement in this case. The terms and conditions of that agreement are as follows.

1. Guilty Plea

Defendant agrees to enter a plea of guilty to Count Two of the Indictment, which charges a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343.

2. Elements and Factual Basis

The elements necessary to prove the offense charged in Count Two are that (1) the Defendant voluntarily and intentionally devised or participated in a scheme to defraud another out of money; (2) the false pretenses, representations, or promises were about a material fact; (3) the Defendant acted with the intent to defraud; and (4) the Defendant transmitted or caused to be transmitted by wire some communication in interstate commerce to help carry out the scheme to defraud.

Defendant agrees that she is, in fact, guilty of this offense. She agrees to the accuracy of the following facts, which satisfy each of the offense's required elements:

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From in or around July 2020, and continuing until in or around August 2020, in the Southern District of Georgia, the defendant, Sonya Barnes, aided and abetted by others, known and unknown, did knowingly devise and intend to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud, and to obtain money and property, by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice and to obtain money and property, caused interstate communications to be made over the Internet, in furtherance of the scheme and artifice to defraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

In furtherance of this scheme, and to effect the objects thereof, the Defendant committed the following overt acts:

- It was part of the scheme that Barnes, aided and abetted by others, known and unknown, unjustly enriched herself and others by obtaining EIDL proceeds under false and misleading pretenses including by making false statements about the number of individuals her company employed and her company's gross revenue.
- It was further part of the scheme that the Defendant, aided and abetted by others, known and unknown, submitted, or caused to be submitted, two SBA loan applications at <https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/> for the following business: On or about July 3, 2020, Barnes submitted, or caused to be submitted, an electronic application for an EIDL from the SBA ("EIDL Application -6534") for a business called "Sonya Salon Shop." In connection with EIDL Application -6534, Barnes falsely affirmed, among other

information, that her business had 10 employees and that in the twelve months prior to the disaster the business had \$60,750 in gross revenue. Barnes listed 3307 Greening Lane in Augusta, Georgia as the business's address.

- On or about July 7, 2020, in reliance on Barnes's false representations in "EIDL Application -6534" on behalf of her business, "Sonya Salon Shop," the SBA deposited money into a bank account in Barnes's name at "Bank 2."
- On or about July 3, 2020, in the Southern District of Georgia, the Defendant, Sonya Barnes, aided and abetted by others, known and unknown, for the purpose of executing the scheme and artifice described above, and attempting to do so, caused to be transmitted by means of wire communication from the Southern District of Georgia to a location outside the state of Georgia signals and sounds constituting an online submission of EIDL Application -6534 on behalf of business Sonya Salon Shop.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 2.

3. Possible Sentence

Defendant's guilty plea will subject her to the following maximum possible sentence: 20 years' imprisonment, 3 years' supervised release, a \$250,000 fine, such restitution as may be ordered by the Court, and forfeiture of all forfeitable assets. The Court additionally must impose a \$100 special assessment per count of conviction.

4. No Promised Sentence



No one has promised Defendant that the Court will impose any particular sentence or a sentence within any particular range. The Court is not bound by any estimate of sentence given or recommendations made by Defendant's counsel, the government, the U.S. Probation Office, or anyone else. The Court may impose a sentence up to the statutory maximum. Defendant will not be allowed to withdraw her plea of guilty if she receives a more severe sentence than she expects.

5. Court's Use of Sentencing Guidelines

The Court is obligated to use the United States Sentencing Guidelines to calculate the applicable guideline range for Defendant's offense. The Sentencing Guidelines are advisory; the Court is not required to impose a sentence within the range those Guidelines suggest. The Court will consider that range, possible departures under the Sentencing Guidelines, and other sentencing factors under 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), in determining the Defendant's sentence. The Sentencing Guidelines are based on all of Defendant's relevant conduct, pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 1B1.3, not just the conduct underlying the particular Count or Counts to which Defendant is pleading guilty.

6. Agreements Regarding Sentencing Guidelines

a. Use of Information

Nothing in this agreement precludes the government from providing full and accurate information to the Court and U.S. Probation Office for use in calculating the applicable Sentencing Guidelines range.

b. Acceptance of Responsibility

If the Court determines that Defendant qualifies for an adjustment under U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(a), and the offense level prior to operation of § 3E1.1(a) is 16 or greater, the government will move for an additional one-level reduction in offense level pursuant to Section 3E1.1(b) based on Defendant's timely notification of her intention to enter a guilty plea.

c. Amount of Loss

The government and Defendant agree to recommend to the U.S. Probation Office and the Court at sentencing that the amount of loss, for purposes of Section 2B1.1 of the Sentencing Guidelines, is more than \$6,500 and less than \$15,000.

7. Dismissal of Other Counts

At sentencing, the government will move to dismiss any other Counts of the Indictment that remain pending against Defendant.

8. Forfeiture

a. Defendant agrees to forfeit her interest in any property constituting, or derived from, any proceeds obtained, directly or indirectly, as a result of the Title 21 offense to which she has agreed to plead guilty, and any property used, or intended to be used, in any manner or part, to commit, or facilitate the commission of that offense (collectively, the "Subject Property").

b. Defendant waives and abandons all right, title, and interest in the Subject Property. Defendant agrees to take all steps requested by the government to facilitate transfer of title of the Subject Property to the government. Defendant further agrees not to file any claim, answer, or petition for remission or mitigation in



any administrative or judicial proceeding pertaining to the Subject Property. If any such document has already been filed, Defendant hereby withdraws that filing.

c. Defendant agrees to hold the government and its agents and employees harmless from any claims made in connection with the seizure, forfeiture, or disposal of property connected to this case. Defendant further agrees to waive the requirements of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 32.2 and 43(a) regarding notice of the forfeiture in the charging instrument, announcement of the forfeiture at sentencing, and incorporation of the forfeiture in the judgment.

d. Defendant waives and abandons her interest in any other property that may have been seized in connection with this case. Additionally, Defendant waives any and all challenges on any grounds to the seizure, forfeiture, and disposal of any property seized in connection with this case. Defendant specifically agrees to waive any challenges arising under the Double Jeopardy Clause of the Fifth Amendment and the Excessive Fines Clause of the Eighth Amendment.

9. Financial Obligations and Agreements

a. Restitution

The amount of restitution ordered by the Court shall include restitution for the full loss caused by Defendant's total criminal conduct. Restitution is not limited to the specific counts to which Defendant is pleading guilty. Any restitution judgment is intended to and will survive Defendant, notwithstanding the abatement of any underlying criminal conviction.

b. Special Assessment

Defendant agrees to pay a special assessment in the amount of \$100, payable to the Clerk of the United States District Court, which shall be due immediately at the time of sentencing.

c. Release of Appearance Bond

Defendant authorizes the Clerk of the United States District Court to release the funds posted as security for an appearance bond in this case to be applied to satisfy any of the financial obligations including forfeiture imposed by judgment of the Court in this case.

d. Required Financial Disclosures

By the date that Defendant enters a guilty plea, Defendant shall complete a financial disclosure form listing all her assets and financial interests, whether held directly or indirectly, solely or jointly, in her name or in the name of another. Defendant shall sign the financial disclosure form under penalty of perjury and provide that form to the Financial Litigation Unit of the United States Attorney's Office and to the United States Probation Office. Defendant authorizes the United States to obtain credit reports on Defendant and to share the contents of those reports with the Court and the United States Probation Office. Defendant also authorizes the United States Attorney's Office to inspect and copy all financial documents and information held by the United States Probation Office.

e. Financial Examination

Defendant will submit to an examination under oath on the issue of her financial disclosures and assets if deemed necessary by the United States. Such



examination will occur not later than 30 days after the entry of Defendant's guilty plea.

f. No Transfer of Assets

Defendant certifies that she has made no transfer of assets in contemplations of this prosecution for the purpose of evading or defeating financial obligations or forfeiture created by this Agreement or that may be imposed upon her by the Court at sentencing. Defendant promises that she will make no such transfers in the future.

g. Material Change in Circumstances

Defendant agrees to notify the United States of any material change in circumstances, as described in 18 U.S.C. § 3664(k), that occurs prior to sentencing in this case. Such notification will be made within seven days of the event giving rise to the changed circumstances, and in no event later than the date of sentencing.

h. Enforcement

Any payment schedule imposed by the Court is without prejudice to the United States to take all actions and remedies available to it to collect the full amount of the financial obligations imposed by the judgment of the Court in this case. Defendant understands and agrees that the financial obligations and forfeiture imposed by the judgment of the Court in this case will be placed on the Treasury Offset Program so that any federal payment that Defendant receives may be offset and applied to the judgment debt without regard to or affecting any payment schedule imposed by the Court.

10. Waivers

a. Waiver of Appeal

Defendant entirely waives her right to a direct appeal of her conviction and sentence on any ground (including any argument that the statute to which the defendant is pleading guilty is unconstitutional or that the admitted conduct does not fall within the scope of the statute). The only exceptions are that the Defendant may file a direct appeal of her sentence if (1) the court enters a sentence above the statutory maximum, (2) the court enters a sentence above the advisory Sentencing Guidelines range found to apply by the court at sentencing; or (3) the Government appeals the sentence. Absent those exceptions, Defendant explicitly and irrevocably instructs her attorney not to file an appeal.

b. Waiver of Collateral Attack

Defendant entirely waives her right to collaterally attack her conviction and sentence on any ground and by any method, including but not limited to a 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion. The only exception is that Defendant may collaterally attack her conviction and sentence based on a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel.

c. FOIA and Privacy Act Waiver

Defendant waives all rights, whether asserted directly or through a representative, to request or receive from any department or agency of the United States any record pertaining to the investigation or prosecution of this case under the authority of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, or the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a, and all subsequent amendments thereto.

d. Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(f) and Fed. R. Evid. 410 Waiver

Rule 11(f) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and Rule 410 of the Federal Rules of Evidence ordinarily limit the admissibility of statements made by a defendant during the course of plea discussions or plea proceedings. Defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the protections of these rules. If Defendant fails to plead guilty, or her plea of guilty is later withdrawn, all of Defendant's statements in connection with this plea, and any leads derived therefrom, shall be admissible for any and all purposes.

11. Defendant's Rights

Defendant has the right to be represented by counsel, and if necessary have the court appoint counsel, at trial and at every other critical stage of the proceeding. Defendant possesses a number of rights which she will waive by pleading guilty, including: the right to plead not guilty, or having already so pleaded, to persist in that plea; the right to a jury trial; and the right at trial to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, to be protected from compelled self-incrimination, to testify and present evidence, and to compel the attendance of witnesses.

12. Satisfaction with Counsel

Defendant has had the benefit of legal counsel in negotiating this agreement. Defendant believes that her attorney has represented her faithfully, skillfully, and diligently, and she is completely satisfied with the legal advice given and the work performed by her attorney.

13. Breach of Plea Agreement

If Defendant fails to plead guilty, withdraws or attempts to withdraw her guilty plea, commits any new criminal conduct following the execution of this agreement, or otherwise breaches this agreement, the government is released from all of its agreements regarding Defendant's sentence, including any agreements regarding the calculation of Defendant's advisory Sentencing Guidelines. In addition, the government may declare the plea agreement null and void, reinstate any counts that may have been dismissed pursuant to the plea agreement, and/or file new charges against Defendant that might otherwise be barred by this plea agreement. Defendant waives any statute-of-limitations or speedy trial defense to prosecutions reinstated or commenced under this paragraph.

14. Entire Agreement

This agreement contains the entire agreement between the government and Defendant.

BOBBY L. CHRISTINE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY



Karl I. Knoche
Chief, Criminal Division

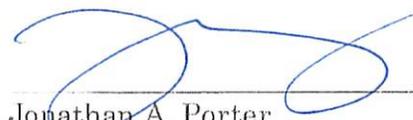
Date

Patrick J. Schwedler

*with
express
permission
JAP*

Patrick J. Schwedler
Georgia Bar No. 812313
Assistant United States Attorney

Date



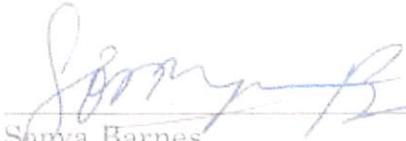
Jonathan A. Porter
Georgia Bar No. 725457
Assistant United States Attorney

Date



I have read and carefully reviewed this agreement with my attorney. I understand each provision of this agreement, and I voluntarily agree to it. I hereby stipulate that the factual basis set out therein is true and accurate in every respect.

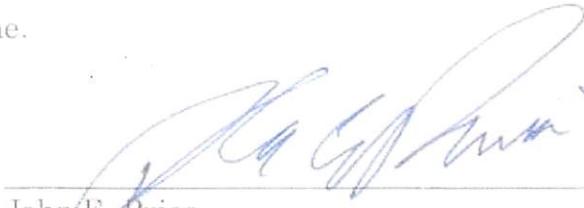
1/27/2021
Date



Sonya Barnes
Defendant

I have fully explained to Defendant all of her rights, and I have carefully reviewed each and every part of this agreement with her. I believe that she fully and completely understands it, and that her decision to enter into this agreement is an informed, intelligent, and voluntary one.

1/27/2021
Date



John E. Price
Defendant's Attorney



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
AUGUSTA DIVISION

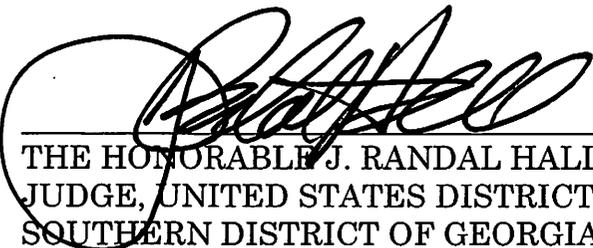
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
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v.)	CR: 120-103
)	
JADA NELSON)	
SONYA BARNES)	

ORDER

The aforesaid Plea Agreement, having been considered by the Court in conjunction with the interrogation by the Court of Defendant Sonya Barnes and her attorney at a hearing on Defendant Sonya Barnes' motion to change her plea and the Court finding that the plea of guilty is made freely, voluntarily and knowingly, it is thereupon,

ORDERED that the plea of guilty by Defendant Sonya Barnes be, and it is, hereby accepted and the foregoing Plea Agreement be, and it is, hereby ratified and confirmed.

This 27th day of April 2021.



THE HONORABLE J. RANDAL HALL
JUDGE, UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA