

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
RECEIVED

SEP 29 2022

TONY R. MOORE, CLERK
BY _____
DEPUTY

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA * CRIMINAL NO. 6:21-CR-00043-01
VERSUS * JUDGE SUMMERHAYS
CHANCE J. SENECA * MAGISTRATE JUDGE WHITEHURST

PLEA AGREEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

1. This document contains the complete plea agreement between the government and CHANCE J. SENECA, the defendant. No other agreement, understanding, promise, or condition exists, nor will any such agreement, understanding, promise or condition exist unless it is committed to writing in an amendment attached to this document and signed by the defendant, an attorney for the defendant, and an attorney for the government. The terms of this plea agreement are only binding on the defendant and the government if the Court accepts the defendant's guilty plea.

B. THE DEFENDANT'S OBLIGATIONS

1. CHANCE J. SENECA shall appear in open court and plead guilty to count 3 of the indictment pending in this case.

C. THE GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATIONS

1. If the defendant completely fulfills all obligations and agreements under this plea agreement, the government agrees to dismiss the remaining counts of the indictment after sentencing, and it will not prosecute the defendant for any other offense known to the United States Attorney's Office, based on the investigation which forms the basis of the indictment.

2. The government will and hereby moves pursuant to U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(b) for the defendant to receive a one-point reduction in offense level should that offense level be 16 or greater, as the defendant has assisted authorities in the investigation or prosecution of his own misconduct by timely notifying authorities of his intention to enter a plea of guilty, thereby permitting the government to avoid preparing for trial and permitting the government and the Court to allocate resources efficiently.

D. SENTENCING

CHANCE J. SENECA understands and agrees that:

1. The maximum punishment on count 3 is a term of imprisonment for any term of years or for life (pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)) and a fine of not more than \$250,000 (pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §3571);

2. The defendant shall be required to pay a special assessment of \$100 at the time of the guilty plea by means of a cashier's check, official bank check, or money order payable to "Clerk, U.S. District Court";

3. The defendant may receive a term of supervised release of not more than five (5) years in length in addition to any term of imprisonment imposed by the Court;

4. A violation of any condition of supervised release at any time during the period of supervised release may result in the defendant being incarcerated over and above any period of imprisonment initially ordered by the Court;

5. The period of incarceration for a violation of a condition of supervised release could be as much as the full term of supervised release initially ordered by the Court, regardless of the amount of time of the supervised release the defendant has successfully completed;

6. In addition to the penalties set forth in the preceding paragraphs, the Court must order restitution in this case, and the defendant agrees that restitution in this case is not limited to the amounts or victim referred to in the specific charge to which the defendant has pled guilty. Restitution will be determined by the Court after a complete review of the evidence developed in the investigation of this case by the government and further investigation by the United States Probation Office as contained in the Presentence Report, and the Court may order the defendant to pay restitution amounts to all victims listed in the indictment, H.W., J.F., and T.G.;

7. Any fine and/or restitution imposed as part of the defendant's sentence will be made due and payable immediately, and any federal income tax refund received by the defendant from the Internal Revenue Service while there is an

outstanding fine and/or restitution shall be applied toward the fine and/or restitution award;

8. The defendant expressly authorizes the U.S. Attorney's Office to immediately obtain a credit report on him to be used in consideration of his ability to pay restitution or fine that may be imposed by the Court;

9. As part of the presentence investigation, the government will make available to the Court all evidence developed in the investigation of this case;

10. This case is governed by the Sentencing Reform Act as modified by United States v. Booker, 543 U.S. 220 (2005), and the defendant has discussed the Sentencing Guidelines and its applicability with his counsel and understands and acknowledges that a final determination of the applicable guidelines range cannot be made until the completion of the presentence investigation;

11. The sentencing judge alone will decide what sentence to impose; and

12. The failure of the Court to adhere to a sentencing recommendation tendered by counsel shall not be a basis for setting aside the guilty plea which is the subject of this agreement.

E. REINSTATEMENT OF ORIGINAL INDICTMENT

1. CHANCE J. SENECA understands and agrees that should this plea be overturned for any reason at a later date, the indictment, in its entirety, will be automatically reinstated without need for presentment to a Grand Jury or any motion or other action by the government.

F. ENTIRETY OF AGREEMENT

1. This plea agreement consists of this document and any addendum required by Standing Order 1.86. The defendant, the defendant's attorney, and the government acknowledge that this plea agreement is a complete statement of the parties' plea agreement in this case. It supersedes all other plea agreements and may not be modified unless the modification is in writing and signed by all parties. No other promises have been made or implied.

G. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENDANT, THE DEFENDANT, AND THE ATTORNEY FOR THE GOVERNMENT

I have read this plea agreement and have discussed it fully with my client, CHANCE J. SENECA. I concur in CHANCE J. SENECA pleading guilty as set forth in this plea agreement.

Dated: 7/13/22



DUSTIN C. TALBOT
Assistant Federal Public Defender
102 Versailles Blvd., Suite 816
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
Telephone: (337) 262-6336

I have read this plea agreement and have discussed it with my attorney. I fully understand the plea agreement and accept and agree to it without reservation. I do this voluntarily and of my own free will. No threats have been made to me, nor am I under the influence of anything that could impede my ability to fully understand this plea agreement.

I am satisfied with the legal services provided by my attorney in connection with this plea agreement and the matters related to this case.

Dated: 7.13.22

Chance Seneca
CHANCE J. SENECA
Defendant

I accept and agree to this plea agreement on behalf of the United States of America.

BRANDON B. BROWN
United States Attorney
Western District of Louisiana

9-2-22
Date

[Signature]
MYERS P. NAMIE
Assistant United States Attorney
800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200
Lafayette, LA 70501
Telephone: (337) 262-6618

KRISTEN M. CLARKE
Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

9-29-22
Date

[Signature]
THOMAS JOHNSON
Trial Attorney, Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
150 M Street NE
Washington, DC 20530
Telephone: (202) 616-3004

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	*
VERSUS	* JUDGE SUMMERHAYS
	*
CHANCE J. SENECA	* MAGISTRATE JUDGE WHITEHURST

**UNDERSTANDING OF MAXIMUM PENALTY
AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

I, CHANCE J. SENECA, the above-named defendant, having been furnished a copy of the charges and having discussed same with my attorney, state that I understand the nature of the charges against me and the maximum possible penalties that may be imposed against me, as follows:

PENALTY – COUNT 3: A term of imprisonment of any term of years or for life, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1201(a); a fine of up to \$250,000 pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3571, or both; a term of supervised release of not more than five (5) years, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3583(b)(1); and a special assessment of \$100.00, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3013, which under this agreement is payable and due **at the time his guilty plea is entered**, and defendant agrees to tender the \$100.00 special assessment by means of a cashier's check, bank official check, or money order payable to the "Clerk, U.S. District Court."

I further state that I understand:

1. My right to be represented by counsel (a lawyer) of my choice, or if I cannot afford counsel, my right to be represented by court-appointed counsel at no cost to me;
2. My right to plead guilty or not guilty;

3. My right to have a jury trial with twelve jurors who must all agree as to my guilt in order to convict;

4. My right not to be required to testify against myself or at all, if I do not so desire;

5. My right to confront and cross-examine witnesses against me and my right to have compulsory process to require witnesses to testify.

I realize that by pleading guilty, I stand convicted of the crime charged and waive my privilege against self-incrimination, my right to jury trial, my right to confront and cross-examine witnesses, and my right of compulsory process.

I further state that my plea in this matter is free and voluntary and that it has been made without any threats or inducements whatsoever (except the Plea Agreement) from anyone associated with the State or United States Government or my attorney, and that the only reason I am pleading guilty is that I am in fact guilty as charged.

Thus done and signed this ____ day of _____ 2022, at Lafayette, Louisiana.

7.13.22
Date

Chance Seneca
CHANCE J. SENECA
Defendant

7/13/22
Date

D. Talbot
DUSTIN C. TALBOT
Assistant Federal Public Defender
102 Versailles Blvd., Suite 816
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
Telephone: (337) 262-6336

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STIPULATED FACTUAL BASIS FOR GUILTY PLEA

NOW INTO COURT, comes the United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Louisiana and the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, through the undersigned Attorneys, and the defendant, CHANCE J. SENECA (“Seneca”), represented by his undersigned counsel, and for the purposes of providing the Court with a factual basis for a plea agreement pursuant to Rule 11(b)(3) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, hereby stipulate as follows:

Beginning in or about May 2020, Seneca, who had previously engaged in sexual conduct with both men and women, used his cell phone to communicate with H.W., a gay man, through Grindr and Snapchat. Grindr is an internet-based social media and dating application primarily used by gay and bisexual men to meet other men. Snapchat is an internet-based social media and messaging application. In the course of his Grindr and Snapchat conversations with H.W., Seneca pretended that he was interested in meeting with H.W. for recreational or romantic purposes. But Seneca’s

true purpose was to seize, inveigle, kidnap, abduct, and hold H.W. for the unlawful purpose of killing and dismembering him for his own gratification.

On or about June 20, 2020, Seneca used his 2006 Toyota Corolla to pick up H.W. and drive him to Seneca's father's house on Maryview Farm Road in Lafayette, Louisiana. Later that same evening, Seneca proposed a sexual encounter and convinced H.W. to put on handcuffs. Seneca then attempted to satisfy his homicidal urges by trying to murder H.W., who at that time was held against his will. Seneca used a belt to strangle H.W. from behind until H.W. was unconscious. After the strangulation, Seneca pulled H.W. into a bathtub, stripped him of his clothing, and prepared to begin the dismemberment process. To make sure that H.W. was dead, Seneca hit H.W. in the back of the head with a hammer and stabbed him in the neck with an ice pick. Seneca also used a Bowie knife to slit H.W.'s wrists.

That same night, shortly before midnight, Seneca called 911. Seneca told the dispatcher that someone was strangled, he was the person responsible, and that he was waiting outside his father's house to speak with officers. When first responders arrived, they entered the home and found H.W. lying naked and unconscious in Seneca's bathtub. Officers also saw weapons, such as a knife, ice pick, saw, and hammer, around the bathroom as well as blood on the floor and in the bathtub.

On or about June 20, 2020, officers of the Lafayette Police Department detained and arrested Seneca. Within the next week, Seneca made voluntary, *Mirandized* statements to a Lafayette Police Department detective as well as an FBI Special Agent. Among other things, Seneca admitted the following:

- Seneca met H.W. through Grindr and decided to kill and dismember him. On June 20, 2020, Seneca drove H.W. to his house, handcuffed him, and attempted to murder him.
- Seneca took out a handgun as a “dark joke” when he told H.W. to put on the handcuffs.
- Seneca had planned to preserve and keep H.W.’s body parts.
- Before the police arrived, Seneca deleted the Grindr conversation between himself and H.W. in order to “get rid of things.”
- Seneca used Grindr and Snapchat to lure another gay man to his father’s house on June 19, 2020, but he decided not to murder the man and let him go.
- Seneca had planned to continue murdering until he was caught or killed.
- In response to the question, “Do you have these feelings [to murder others] with just other men? Is this—is your targets men?” Seneca responded, “Yeah. I’ve never really wanted to hurt . . . women. But . . . it’s just mostly men.”

On or about June 20, 2020, emergency responders transported H.W. to a local hospital, where he lay intubated in a coma for three days. H.W. ultimately survived. However, he required extensive medical care to rehabilitate the damaged and severed tendons of his wrists, and he suffered permanent nerve damage in his left hand. His wrists were also scarred from slicing-injuries that penetrated to the bone.

In connection with the offense, the defendant used facilities and instrumentalities of interstate commerce, such as a car, a cell phone, the internet, and social media applications such as Grindr and Snapchat.

The offense was begun, continued, or completed in one of the Parishes that make up the Western District of Louisiana.

7.13.22
Date

Chance Seneca
CHANCE J. SENECA
Defendant

7/13/22
Date

D. Talbot
DUSTIN C. TALBOT
Assistant Federal Public Defender
102 Versailles Blvd., Suite 816
Lafayette, Louisiana 70501
Telephone: (337) 262-6336

9-2-22
Date

BRANDON B. BROWN
United States Attorney
Western District of Louisiana
[Signature]
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KRISTEN M. CLARKE
Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

9-29-22
Date

Thomas Johnson
THOMAS JOHNSON
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ELEMENTS OF OFFENSE

KIDNAPPING
18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(1)

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1201(a)(1), makes it a crime for anyone to unlawfully seize, inveigle, kidnap, or abduct another person in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce for some reward or purpose or benefit.

For you to be guilty of this crime, the government would have to prove each of the following beyond a reasonable doubt:

- First:* That you, knowingly acting contrary to law, kidnapped, seized, inveigled, or abducted H.W., as charged;
- Second:* That you kidnapped, seized, inveigled, or abducted for some reward or purpose or benefit;
- Third:* That you transported, seized, kidnapped, or abducted H.W. without their consent; and
- Fourth:* You willfully transported (the person described in the indictment), and used the mail or any means, facility or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce in committing or in furtherance of the commission of the offense.

To “kidnap” a person means to unlawfully hold, keep, detain, or confine the person against the person’s will and without their consent. Involuntariness or coercion in connection with the victim's detention is an essential part of the offense.

To “inveigle” a person means to lure, entice, or lead the person astray by false representations, promises, or other deceitful means.

II.
VENUE
[18 U.S.C. § 3237(a)]

If the case were to proceed to trial, the government would also have the burden of proving proper venue - that is the government would have to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the offense was begun, continued, or completed in one of the Parishes that make up the Western District of Louisiana.

Signature of the Parties:

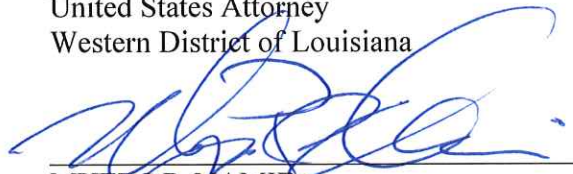
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