

Approved:

DOMINIC A. GENTILE
Assistant United States Attorney

Before:

HONORABLE JAMES L. COTT
Chief, United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York

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 :
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : **AMENDED COMPLAINT**
 :
 - v. - : Violations of
 : 18 U.S.C. §§ 1958, 922(g)(1), and 2
 HYUNKOOK KORSIK, :
 :
 Defendant. :
 :
 - - - - - x

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.:

CHRISTOPHER SEROTTA, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), and charges as follows:

COUNT ONE
(Murder-for-Hire)

1. From at least in or about December 2022, up to and including at least on or about March 8, 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, traveled in or caused another to travel in interstate or foreign commerce, and used or caused another to use the mail or any facility of interstate or foreign commerce, with intent that a murder be committed in violation of the laws of any State and the United States as consideration for the receipt of, and as consideration for a promise and agreement to pay anything of pecuniary value, and aided and abetted the same, to wit, in exchange for the promise of a payment of \$50,000, KORSIK agreed to murder an individual, which arrangement depended, in part, on interstate travel, and, in part, on use of cellular telephones operating on interstate networks.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1958 and 2.)

COUNT TWO
(Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon)

2. On or about March 8, 2023, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, knowing he had previously been convicted in a court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, knowingly did

possess firearms, to wit, (1) a Palmetto State Armory AR-15 rifle; (2) a Sig Sauer 9MM semi-automatic pistol; and (3) a Salient Arms AR-15 rifle, which previously had been shipped and transported in interstate and foreign commerce.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1).)

The bases for my knowledge and for the foregoing charges are, in part, as follows:

1. I am a Special Agent with the FBI. I have been personally involved in the investigation of this matter. This Affidavit is based upon my personal participation in the investigation, my examination of reports and records, and my conversations with other law enforcement agents and other individuals. Because this Affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of demonstrating probable cause, it does not include all the facts that I have learned during the course of my investigation. Where the contents of documents and the actions, statements, and conversations of others are reported herein, they are reported in substance and in part, except where otherwise indicated.

Background

2. Based on my review of documents, my conversations with other law enforcement officers, my review of recordings made over the course of this investigation, as well as my own personal observations and involvement in this investigation, I have learned, among other things, the following:

a. In or about August 2022, the FBI began investigating HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, after FBI agents received information regarding KORSIK's expressed interest in a murder-for-hire plot through communications intercepted by the Bureau of Prisons. Agents were able to introduce an undercover FBI agent ("UC-1"), posing as a member of a transnational criminal organization engaged in money laundering, drug and weapons trafficking and various acts of violence, including murder (the "Organization"), to KORSIK.

b. On or about December 2, 2022, UC-1 began communicating with KORSIK via "Telegram"¹ regarding the interest KORSIK expressed in committing murders-for-hire. On or about January 9, 2023, KORSIK and UC-1 spoke via Telegram and agreed to meet at a location ("Meet Location-1") in the Battery Park neighborhood of Manhattan on January 12, 2023.

The January 12, 2023 Meeting

3. Based on my review of documents, my conversations with other law enforcement officers, including UC-1, my review of recordings made over the course of this investigation, as well as my own personal observations and involvement in this investigation, I have learned, among other things, the following:

¹ Telegram is a cross-platform messaging app that offers enhanced privacy and encryption features to its users allowing text and voice messages to self-destruct after review by a recipient.

a. On or about January 12, 2023, at approximately 1:00 p.m., a 2023 gray Chevrolet Malibu bearing Maine temporary registration number 2433532 (the “Malibu”) parked in the vicinity of Meet Location-1.² HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, exited the driver’s side of the Malibu and entered the lobby of Meet Location-1. KORSIK was met by another FBI agent acting in an undercover capacity (“UC-2”) and directed to the area where UC-1 and a third undercover FBI agent (“UC-3”) were waiting for him.

b. At approximately 1:56 p.m., KORSIK met with UC-1 and UC-3 inside of Meet Location-1. The meeting between UC-1, UC-3, and KORSIK was video and audio recorded. UC-1 and KORSIK engaged in the following conversation, in substance and in part:

c. KORSIK told UC-1 that he wanted to work for the Organization and participate in murders-for-hire. UC-1 told KORSIK that UC-1 had a job for him the requirement of which was that “this person comes to New York and doesn’t leave breathing.” KORSIK told UC-1 that “you just tell me where to go and what to do and you know I can make that happen.” KORSIK agreed to murder the intended target (“Victim-1”) in return for a payment of \$50,000 from UC-1 and asked UC-1 if UC-1 would be able to provide him with information regarding Victim-1’s location and itinerary while Victim-1 was staying in New York. KORSIK explained that although he lived in Maine, he was available whenever UC-1 needed him for jobs. UC-1 told KORSIK that the job had to be completed sometime in February or March but that UC-1 and KORSIK would have to meet again to discuss specifics about the murder-for-hire.

The February 23, 2023 Meeting

4. Based on my review of documents, my conversations with other law enforcement officers, including UC-1, my review of recordings made over the course of this investigation, as well as my own personal observations and involvement in this investigation, I have learned, among other things, the following:

a. On or about February 12, 2023, UC-1 communicated with HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, via Telegram. UC-1 and KORSIK agreed to meet in Boston on or about February 23, 2023 during which UC-1 would provide KORSIK with specifics about the murder-for-hire.

b. On or about February 17, 2023, KORSIK communicated with UC-1 via text message over Telegram. KORSIK asked UC-1, in substance and in part, if UC-1 would be able to provide him with two “cans,” which UC-1 understood to mean sound suppression devices or “silencers,” one for a pistol and one for a rifle.

c. On or about February 23, 2023, at approximately 1:40 p.m., UC-1 met with KORSIK at a location in Boston, Massachusetts (“Meet Location-2”). The meeting

² The Malibu is registered to Hyunkook Korsiak at a residence in Augusta, Maine (the “Maine Residence”).

between UC-1 and KORSIK was video and audio recorded. UC-1 and KORSIK engaged in the following conversation, in substance and in part:

d. UC-1 handed KORSIK \$5,000 as expense money for the murder-for-hire and a photograph of Victim-1 along with Victim-1's (fictitious) itinerary in New York City. UC-1 told KORSIK that Victim-1 would be in New York City during the week of March 6, 2023 and staying at a particular midtown Manhattan hotel (the "Manhattan Hotel"). UC-1 told KORSIK that the job would have to be completed within that time frame and provided KORSIK with photos of the inside areas of the Manhattan Hotel. KORSIK asked UC-1 about the placement of the security cameras in the hotel and asked UC-1 to get him a room in the Manhattan Hotel so that KORSIK could limit his presence in the public areas of the hotel. UC-1 and KORSIK agreed to meet on March 7, 2023, the day of the murder, at a hotel in Tarrytown, New York (Meet Location-3), where UC-1 would provide KORSIK with half of the \$50,000 payment before the murder and the remainder after the job was completed. KORSIK told UC-1 that he intended to use an AR-15 rifle or 9MM pistol that KORSIK possessed for the murder-for-hire and that he would bring both firearms to New York City. KORSIK reminded UC-1 about his previous request for silencers for each of the two weapons KORSIK intended to bring with him and also asked UC-1 to provide him with a latex mask so that KORSIK could defeat any facial recognition technology in the area of where the murder would occur. In describing how he would commit the murder, KORSIK told UC-1 that he could shoot Victim-1 from inside his car explaining that "if I could get along-side him, I don't mind going right through my vehicle. Not my vehicle but a vehicle." KORSIK asked UC-1 if UC-1 could provide him with a car to use during the murder-for-hire – one "that doesn't come back to you or anyone you care about." KORSIK and UC-1 agreed to meet again prior to the actual murder-for-hire to coordinate additional specifics of the operation.

e. On or about February 24, 2023, at approximately 5:30 p.m., KORSIK communicated with UC-1 over Telegram. KORSIK and UC-1 agreed to change the pre-murder meeting, previously set for March 7, 2023, to March 8, 2023.

The March 2, 2023 Meeting

5. Based on my review of documents, my conversations with other law enforcement officers, including UC-1 and UC-2, my review of recordings made over the course of this investigation, as well as my own personal observations and involvement in this investigation, I have learned, among other things, the following:

a. On or about March 2, 2023, UC-1 communicated with HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, over Telegram. UC-1 and KORSIK agreed that KORSIK would travel to New York City that same day so that KORSIK could be provided the latex mask KORSIK had requested and which he intended to use during the murder-for-hire.

b. On or about March 2, 2023, at approximately 6:01 a.m., FBI agents established surveillance in the vicinity of the Maine Residence. At approximately 7:06 a.m., KORSIK exited the Maine Residence and drove away in the Malibu.

c. On or about March 2, 2023, UC-2 communicated with KORSIK over Telegram. UC-2 told the KORSIK, in substance and in part, to meet UC-2 at Meet Location-1.

d. On or about March 2, 2023, at approximately 3:30 p.m., FBI agents established surveillance in the vicinity of Meet Location-1. At approximately 4:23 p.m., KORSIK arrived in the Malibu and entered Meet Location-1, where he met with UC-2 and UC-3. The meeting between UC-2, UC-3, and KORSIK, was video and audio recorded. KORSIK and the undercover agents engaged in the following conversation, in substance and in part:

e. UC-2 provided KORSIK with the latex mask (pictured below) he requested for use during the murder-for-hire, which KORSIK tried on to ensure it fit properly. KORSIK told UC-2 that he intended to use a rifle and a pistol for the murder and that he wanted to drive up to the intended target while Victim-1 was walking on the street and shoot Victim-1 from inside the car. KORSIK renewed his previous request for a vehicle to use during the murder, one that would provide him with “a clear line of sight,” preferably a black or gray SUV or minivan. KORSIK explained to UC-3 that he would clean the inside of the car with a pressurized bleach spray to remove any forensic evidence that might be present and that he would be sure not to leave the mask behind because of the potential it may contain DNA evidence. KORSIK asked UC-2 if and when the silencers he asked for would be delivered. KORSIK also asked if the cameras in the Hotel were “obvious” or were any hidden behind “two-way glass.” KORSIK also asked UC-2 about whether UC-2 could provide him with a police uniform to use during the murder-for-hire.

f. Toward the end of the meeting, UC-2 called UC-1 via cellphone so that KORSIK and UC-1 could speak with each other. UC-1 and KORSIK engaged in the following conversation, in substance and in part:

g. UC-1 and KORSIK agreed to meet on March 8, 2023, at approximately 4:00 p.m. at Meet Location-3 where UC-1 would provide KORSIK with the “other things,” which UC-1 intended to mean as the silencers KORSIK had previously requested. UC-1 told KORSIK that he could test out the silencers at Meet Location-3. KORSIK confirmed with UC-1 that UC-1 was able to provide a silencer for both a pistol and rifle. UC-1 then told KORSIK that UC-1 would provide the address of Meet Location-3 when they spoke the following week. When asked where he was headed after the meeting, KORSIK responded that he was going back home to Maine.



The March 8, 2023 Arrest

6. Based on my review of documents, my conversations with other law enforcement officers, including UC-1, my review of recordings made over the course of this investigation, as well as my own personal observations and participation in this investigation, I have learned, among other things, the following:

a. On or about March 3, 2023, UC-1 communicated with HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, via text message over Telegram. KORSIK and UC-1 engaged in the following exchange, in substance and in part:

b. KORSIK told UC-1 that he was considering using an AR-10 with a twenty-inch barrel as a “long range option” for the murder and asked if UC-1 could provide him with the weapon along with .308 Winchester cartridges. KORSIK also asked whether it would be possible for UC-1 to obtain “M-84 flashbangs”³ that KORSIK could use to create a distraction during the operation, if necessary.

c. On or about March 8, 2023, UC-1 communicated with HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, over Telegram. UC-1 provided KORSIK with the address of Meet Location-3 and KORSIK informed UC-1 that he would not arrive until approximately 7:50 p.m.

³ M-84 Flash Bang grenades are a munition used by the military and law enforcement to deliver loud acoustic and bright optical effects to stun or incapacitate a subject or subjects. See U.S. Dep’t of Defense Non-Lethal Weapons Program, <https://jnlwp.defense.gov/Current-Intermediate-Force-Capabilities/M-84-Flash-Bang-Grenade/> (last visited Mar. 8, 2023).

d. On or about March 8, 2023, at approximately 1:00 p.m., FBI agents established surveillance in the vicinity of Meet Location-3. At approximately 7:41 p.m., the Malibu parked in the vicinity of Meet Location-3. HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, exited the driver's side of the Malibu and entered the lobby of Meet Location-3. KORSIK met with UC-1 and engaged in the following conversation, in substance and in part:

e. UC-1 handed KORSIK \$25,000 as partial payment for the murder-for-hire and told KORSIK that the other half of the payment would be delivered to him after the murder of Victim-1 was complete.

f. On or about March 8, 2023, at approximately 7:52 p.m., FBI agents placed KORSIK under arrest. At the time of his arrest, KORSIK was found to be carrying a loaded Sig Sauer 9MM pistol in a black holster and the \$25,000 in cash UC-1 handed him earlier (pictured below).



g. During a search of the Malibu, agents found, among other things: (1) a Palmetto State Armory AR-15 rifle; (2) a Salient Arms AR-15 rifle; (3) a black privately manufactured 9MM pistol that I believe to be a “ghost” gun (i.e., a gun assembled by its user without a serial number); (4) a bullet resistant vest; (5) hundreds of rounds of various caliber ammunition; (6) the latex mask KORSIK was given during the March 2, 2023 meeting with the undercover agents; (6) gun scopes (one with laser sighting capability); and (7) high-capacity magazines (all pictured below).

h. Based on KORSIK's transportation of the Palmetto State Armory AR-15 rifle, the Salient Arms AR-15 rifle, and the Sig Sauer 9MM pistol from his residence in Maine to the Southern District of New York, specifically Meet Location-3, I was able to determine that these firearms, at some point, traveled in interstate commerce.





7. I have reviewed criminal history records pertaining to HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, and have learned that on or about September 19, 2017, KORSIK was convicted in the District of Maine of theft from a licensed firearms dealer, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(u), a felony, and was sentenced to 52 months' imprisonment. KORSIK was incarcerated with the Bureau of Prisons from on or about January 29, 2018 to on or about November 3, 2021.

WHEREFORE, the deponent respectfully requests that HYUNKOOK KORSIK, the defendant, be imprisoned or bailed, as the case may be.

CHRISTOPHER SEROTTA
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me this
9th day of March, 2023

HONORABLE JAMES L. COTT
CHIEF, UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK