

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

v.

Mag. J. No.

24-MJ-136-N

**SANDRA GRIMES,
aka SANDRA KAYE JOHNSON,
JUDY OWEN, and
MITZY SMITH**

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Jennifer Whitehurst, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND

1. I make this affidavit, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 4, in support of an application for a criminal complaint and an accompanying arrest warrant for **Sandra GRIMES** (“Grimes”), also known as Sandra Kaye Johnson, **Judy OWEN**, and **Mitzy SMITH**. All dates, times, locations, and/or amounts listed in my affidavit are approximations.

2. Since December 2004, I have been employed as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”). While assigned to the FBI, I have investigated and assisted with investigating federal criminal violations related to, among other violations, murder-for-hire schemes, gang investigations, narcotics investigations, bank robberies, fugitives, kidnappings, threats, assault of federal officials, and mass killings. I am familiar with methods employed by narcotics traffickers, distributors, smugglers, and users. I have also received training on obtaining and reviewing electronic records, including telephonic and e-mail communications. As part of my investigations, I routinely collect and review electronic evidence, including data gathered from social media accounts. My duties and responsibilities as a Special Agent include conducting

criminal investigations of individuals and entities for possible violations of Federal laws, particularly those laws found in, but not limited to, Title 18 and Title 21 of the United States Code.

3. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from other agents, witnesses and others associated with this investigation. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested complaint and warrant and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.

4. Based on the facts set forth in this affidavit, there is probable cause to believe that violations of **(1) Use of Interstate Commerce Facilities in the Commission of Murder-For-Hire** in violation of 18 United States Code 1958(a), **(2) Conspiracy to Commit Murder-For-Hire** in violation of 18 United States Code 1958, and **(3) Conspiracy to Transfer a Firearm to be used to Commit a Crime of Violence** in violation of 18 United States Code 924(h) have been committed by GRIMES, OWEN, and SMITH in the Southern District of Alabama.

PROBABLE CAUSE

5. On May 3, 2024 through May 6, 2024, Rebecca Murphy provided information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) regarding a Murder-for-Hire (“M4H”) scheme. Specifically, in February 2024, Murphy was hired by GRIMES and her sisters, Judy OWEN and Mitzy SMITH, to murder Grimes’ son-in-law, Raul Mina (also known as Raul Mena). Mina was married to Grimes’ daughter, Irma Nicole Bauer. Grimes informed Murphy that Mina physically assaulted Bauer and their children and drugged Bauer forcing her to have sex with others. Therefore, GRIMES, OWEN, and SMITH hired Murphy to kill Mina.

6. Originally, Smith lived next door to the residence where Murphy previously resided and still had personal items there on CR24 in Fairhope, Alabama. Murphy met Smith through Smith’s relative, Tabitha Smith (Tabitha).

7. In approximately early to mid-February 2024, Murphy was approached by Grimes and her sisters, Smith and Owen, to murder Grimes' son-in-law, Raul Mina, also known as Raul Mena. This was the first occasion Murphy met Grimes and Owen.

8. In approximately mid-February 2024, Murphy's dog was sick with Parvo and was treated by Dr. Dykes in Foley, Alabama. In order to obtain the dog, Murphy owed an additional \$500, which Owen paid. Afterwards, Owen stated because she paid the bill, then Murphy had to kill Mina. Owen immediately drove Murphy to a Walmart parking lot located in either Fairhope or Daphne, Alabama. At the Walmart parking lot, they switched vehicles into Grimes' vehicle, which was a red Buick Envision bearing license plate Z216WH. Then, Grimes drove Owen and Murphy to Louisiana in order to show her Mina's house located at 2105 James Drive, Marrero, Louisiana 70072. There, they physically passed by Mina's house several times. Afterwards, they drove back and did not stay the night anywhere.

9. The purpose of the trip was to inform Murphy of the things Mina did to Bauer and to convince Murphy to murder him. Murphy felt like she was being held hostage on this trip and had no choice on whether or not she could go. Since Mina was a drug user, Grimes and Owen wanted the murder to appear as an overdose. They wanted Murphy to inject Mina with a lethal dose of heroine via a needle. However, they did not care if Murphy had to slit Mina's throat, as long as she got the job done. They stated they had already paid Edward Lane \$10,000 to murder Mina, but he ran-off with the money. Murphy agreed to the scheme, but stated they had to pay her more.

10. After they returned from the day trip, Owen gave Murphy \$350 cash to purchase the heroine. In addition, Murphy owed her mother \$300 for bond. Owen gave Murphy \$300 cash to repay her mother.

11. Within approximately one week, Owen picked up Murphy and they drove back to Marrero, Louisiana for their second trip. Before checking-in to the Sieta Motel, they drove past Mina's residence and his place of business. The following day they met with Grimes and Bauer who were already in Marrero. Bauer and Mina had a hearing at the Jefferson Parish Courthouse regarding child custody issues. Owen wanted Murphy to kill Mina outside of the courthouse, however Murphy refused stating it was daylight and too many cameras. Afterwards, they drove back to Alabama.

12. License plate reader information revealed that Grimes aforementioned Buick drove eastbound on I-10 on February 20, 2024 in Mobile, Alabama at approximately 3:14 p.m. and then in Harold, Florida at approximately 4:46 p.m.

13. Shortly after the second trip, Smith delivered a box of what appeared to be Christmas decorations to Murphy. This exchange occurred in Fairhope, Alabama. The purpose of this was to transfer a firearm to Murphy for the murder. Located at the bottom of the box given to Murphy by Smith was a 9mm Phoenix Arms handgun. The serial number on the gun was obliterated. The magazine located in the gun contained three bullets. When Murphy received the gun, she then knew the sisters were serious about the M4H scheme to murder Mina.

14. Murphy is a convicted felon. Amongst Murphy's felony convictions, Murphy was arrested on February 29, 2016 and later convicted of being in possession of a firearm by a prohibited person (felon) in violation of Title 18, United States Code 922(g).

15. One to two days after receiving the gun which was on or about March 6, 2024, Murphy and her girlfriend, Jessica Montgomery, traveled from Alabama back to Marrero. They stayed a few days at the same Sieta Motel until motel management learned about their dog. Then, they moved to another hotel. They stayed in Louisiana for approximately one week.

16. To disguise their communications, Grimes paid for minutes on Murphy's second phone and stated her code name was "Jack" and Murphy's was "Bob" and "B." Grimes obtained a separate telephone number of 504-447-0234 for these communications. On May 3, 2024, Murphy granted Consent to Search of her second phone to FBI Agents. Itemized below are text messages and payments detailing the M4H scheme.

17. On or about March 4, 2024, Grimes as "Jack" sent a photograph of Mina and his vehicle license plate. On or about March 6, 2024, Murphy responded "So there is no more confusing." Grimes replied "We need that darn gun! Find it, it has your prints on that. Listen to me." / "I am not going to do u wrong!" / "I am the smart one. Trust me, I'm not gonna stare you wrong but you got to, get that thing out of those woods because if they find it, it's got your prints on it. They will test that." / "That b**** was supposed to win in the d*** water." / "Go into."

18. On or about March 7, 2024, Montgomery sent "Jack" a text calling her "Miss Sandra" stating she has not helped much but had to stay in the room all night and asked to make a small request. Grimes replied no and stated she was the one that saved them when the dog was in the vet and they came out crying. During the trip, Murphy asked for money and Grimes replied "U done spent that 500 I gave u already?" The 500 would have referred to \$500 cash.

19. Grimes also paid Murphy via CashApp and texted Montgomery's CashApp account, \$datbitch1976. Grimes account was \$SKGrim67. Grimes asked if Murphy saw the \$1, which the CashApp first payment was \$1. Murphy said yes ma'am. Between March 7, 2024 to April 21, 2024, Grimes sent Murphy via Montgomery's account approximately \$1,010 via CashApp. Murphy stated the money was for the payment to kill Mina and for reimbursement of hotel stay, food and other expenses while in Marrero. Once Murphy returned to Alabama, Grimes continued to pay her in small amounts to keep her enticed to kill Mina.

20. On or about March 7, 2024, Murphy sent Grimes pictures of the aforementioned Phoenix Arms gun that Smith had provided Murphy for the murder. Grimes instructed Murphy to bring it back and she would take care of it and no one will ever find it. Grimes also stated "Don't dump that" and told Murphy to go by there and "scope it out." Murphy informed Grimes that she obtained a "very big ugly mean Cajun" to assist her. Grimes replied with the same message twice "Please get this done so yall can get back." Grimes then sent a photograph of a bedroom and stated it was "his." Then Grimes sent additional photographs to Murphy of the interior of a home stating which rooms were the children's, the kitchen and other rooms. Additionally, Grimes described to Murphy the locations of windows and what rooms certain doors opened into.

21. On March 8, 2024, Murphy referred to Grimes as "miss Grimes," even though it was on the coded telephone line. Murphy then sent Grimes a video while in a vehicle and it was raining. Murphy joked about a possible accident involving "Raul." They again discussed hiring a man to assist Murphy. Grimes told Murphy she was serious and to "Give friend this # not my other ph and tell him to call me."

22. On March 9, 2024, Grimes texted Murphy "So what ya going to do. Well damn with storm no one will hear the gun and pull the brakes on the house." / "He would think the damn lights went out" / "This would be your d*** perfect time even though it's gonna be raining. Nobody will hear anything and nobody, can tell the wiser." / "I'm telling you this is your damn perfect night." / "Go on the side of the house and pull that big a** or I'm d***it shuts all the power off and the entire house." Murphy replied to Grimes the man was on his way (to assist). Grimes replied back "Tell him I love him." Murphy stated "That's between you and that man miss Sandra." Murphy further stated she would wear a mask and afterwards would disappear. Grimes texted "This is the purpose of taking his ass out is so the kids don't live in hell" / "Please don't

make any mistakes. Them kids are mine and Nicole's life." Murphy replied "That's why I'm doing it alone". Later on, Grimes asked if she should chance it with the friend? Murphy replied "please send his deposit he said he will wear a mask" and asked whose room had blue lights. Grimes said it was the girls' room in the front of the house and informed Murphy of a broken blind. Murphy stated they planned to get him at about 3 or 4 when everyone should be asleep.

23. On March 10, 2024, Murphy texted Grimes that they were on their way back to Alabama where she could find someone to help her so that she does not get overpowered since he was a man and she was a woman. Grimes replied "I don't know what to tell ya, I want the gun and bullets brought back and if u coming back. I don't have anymore money.that guy took the last cash I had. Please don't tell me no bullshit about the MF do what ya gotta do. I don't know. Hubby is home I am headed to wk in two hours. This has turned into a real shitshow. Not passed off but this MF tendes to get awY with shit again. That's ok his funding day will come now! With or without u. U stab him in the heart at the door or shoot his ass in the heart or face at the what the f can he do." / "Far as the MF messing with them kids. Yes I know the bastard is. I been saying this I could not get anyone to listen: I am on my verge of going f postal on his ass". They further discuss getting someone to assist Murphy. Grimes stated "If I am paying someone to do then this is the purpose of me not being there.i either going all the way or I am not going." Grimes later stated there were two parades that day in Gretna and to "catch his ass." They continue to text, but ultimately Murphy and Montgomery returned to Alabama.

24. On March 15, 2024, Murphy asked Grimes for Owen's number. Grimes sent "15043960061" / "Call her on this #" / "Don't talk on other".

25. On March 22, 2024, Grimes texted Murphy stating “Read this shit, B if you don’t do something or get someone to help then I will go and do the shit my damn self” and sent screenshots of text messages between Mina and Bauer arguing.

26. On March 23, 2024, Owen utilizing her aforementioned second telephone number texted Murphy “R u going back there can u pay the person an we will pay u back,we already gave u money”. Murphy complained that Owen was mean and that she planned to tell “sister Sandra”. Owen replied “If u not go do nothing we want our money back we got better places to put it”. / “I’m the one who paid for your dog ,my friend who works for the vet knows I paid.I want progress or my money u pick (with an angry faced emoji)”.

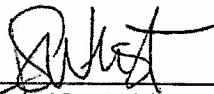
27. On April 5, 2024, Murphy asked Grimes via text message if she had an active warrant. Grimes texted Murphy stating “I really need what money was dished out for. I guess we both need something!”

28. Based on the evidence detailed within Murphy’s second phone and elsewhere, there is probable cause to believe **(1) Use of Interstate Commerce Facilities in the Commission of Murder-For-Hire** in violation of 18 United States Code 1958(a), **(2) Conspiracy to Commit Murder-For-Hire** in violation of 18 United States Code 1958, and **(3) Conspiracy to Transfer a Firearm to be used to Commit a Crime of Violence** in violation of 18 United States Code 924(h) have been committed by GRIMES, OWEN, and SMITH in the Southern District of Alabama.

29. Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Court issue a criminal complaint and an accompanying arrest warrant for Sandra GRIMES, Judy OWEN, and Mitzy SMITH.


Dated May 8, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Whitehurst
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

THE ABOVE AGENT HAD ATTESTED
TO THIS AFFIDAVIT PURSUANT TO
FED. R. CRIM. P. 4.1(b)(2)(A) THIS
_____, MAY 9, 2024.



HONORABLE SONJA F. BIVINS
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE