

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
vs.)
)
BRANDON ARIAS)
a/k/a “TheDrugLlama,”)
)
Defendant.)

CASE NO. 18-CR-30141-NJR-2

STIPULATION OF FACTS

The United States and the Defendant agree and stipulate as follows:

1. From an unknown date but at least on or about October 1, 2016, and continuing until on or about August 2, 2018, Melissa Scanlan (a/k/a “TheDrugLlama”), Brandon Arias (a/k/a “TheDrugLlama”), Daniel Wheeler (a/k/a “Danny”), Fausto Ramirez, April Kelly, Norma Dominguez, and others not named in the Superseding Indictment agreed and conspired to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl in Madison County, Illinois and elsewhere.
2. Madison County, Illinois is located within the Southern District of Illinois.
3. On or about April 30, 2018, in Madison County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally distributed 20 pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl (a fentanyl analogue). This distribution was made in furtherance of the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and was reasonably foreseeable to Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias. At the time of this distribution, Scanlan and Arias both knew that the fentanyl was a controlled substance.

4. On or about June 4, 2018, in Madison County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally distributed 5 pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl. This distribution was made in furtherance of the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and was reasonably foreseeable to Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias. At the time of this distribution, Scanlan and Arias both knew that the fentanyl was a controlled substance.

5. On or about July 3, 2018, in Madison County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally distributed 200 pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl. This distribution was made in furtherance of the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and was reasonably foreseeable to Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias. At the time of this distribution, Scanlan and Arias both knew that the fentanyl was a controlled substance.

6. On or about July 24, 2018, in Madison County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally distributed 100 pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl. This distribution was made in furtherance of the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and was reasonably foreseeable to Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias. At the time of this distribution, Scanlan and Arias both knew that the fentanyl was a controlled substance.

7. On or about July 30, 2018, in Madison County, Illinois, within the Southern District of Illinois, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally distributed 10 pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl. This distribution was made in furtherance of the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and was reasonably foreseeable to Melissa Scanlan and Brandon

Arias. At the time of this distribution, Scanlan and Arias both knew that the fentanyl was a controlled substance.

8. From an unknown date but at least on or about October 1, 2016, and continuing until on or about August 2, 2018, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally sold, with the intent to defraud, Mallinckrodt Oxycodone HCl 30 mg tablets embossed on one side of each tablet with the letter "M," and on the other side of each tablet, the number "30," in the Southern District of Illinois. These tablets were counterfeit, and were not manufactured by or under the authorization of Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals.

9. On or about April 24, 2018, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias knowingly and intentionally introduced into interstate commerce in the Southern District of Illinois, with the intent to defraud, a drug with the brand name Cytotec that was misbranded within the meaning of 21 U.S.C. 352(f)(1). The drug introduced into interstate commerce by Scanlan and Arias failed to bear adequate directions for use and its labeling failed to bear adequate warnings.

10. Throughout the course of the fentanyl trafficking conspiracy charged in Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment, Melissa Scanlan sold large quantities of counterfeit pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl for at least one year prior to her arrest on September 5, 2018. During that one year time frame (approximately 52 weeks), Scanlan sold – at the very least – 1,000 counterfeit pills containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl every week. In total, Scanlan sold approximately 52,000 fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills during that one year time frame. The average weight per pill sold by Scanlan – with each pill containing fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl – was 0.109 grams per pill.

11. On March 19, 2018, Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias began selling the counterfeit fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills on the dark web. The dark web is a part of the internet

that is unreachable by traditional search engines and web browsers. Websites on the dark web have complex web addresses generated by a computer algorithm and must be accessed using special software that is capable of connecting to “The Onion Router” network, or “TOR” for short. The TOR network is encrypted and routes internet traffic dynamically through a series of computers around the world, concealing the true Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of the computers accessing the network and thereby making internet use virtually anonymous.

12. Melissa Scanlan and Brandon Arias sold counterfeit fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills on the dark web marketplace known as the “Dream Market” under the moniker “TheDrugLlama.” Scanlan and Arias chose to sell illegal narcotics on the dark web in the hopes that their identities would be concealed from law enforcement. On the Dream Market operating as TheDrugLlama, Scanlan and Arias offered many illegal narcotics for sale, including: “pressed oxy 30,” “genuine oxycodone 30mg,” “amphetamine,” “morphine,” percocet,” “temazepam,” “flexeril” “genuine oxycodone,” “opiate power pack (pressed blues, morphine, fent),” “Cytotech (abortion pill),” “subsys” (a sublingual fentanyl spray), and other illicit items. Through their operation of TheDrugLlama account, Scanlan and Arias completed over 800 dark web transactions, and distributed large amounts of fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills to customers across the country.

13. Scanlan’s role in the conspiracy was to source all of the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills for TheDrugLlama account. In that role, Scanlan received at least 1,000 fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills per week from Fausto Ramirez and another member of a Mexican cartel. Fausto Ramirez and the other Mexican cartel member (both residents and citizens of Mexico) would typically send drug couriers, including Norma Dominguez and April Kelly, across the border to the United States to deliver fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills to Scanlan and Arias at their residence

in San Diego, California. The drug couriers, including Norma Dominguez and April Kelly, would transport these pills in body cavities and deliver the pills to Scanlan and Arias. Once Scanlan and Arias obtained the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills, Scanlan would provide the drug proceeds to the drug couriers so that the couriers could transport the drug proceeds across the border into Mexico and deliver those drug proceeds to Fausto Ramirez and the other Mexican cartel member. According to Scanlan, Fausto Ramirez and the other Mexican cartel member informed her that the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills did not contain fentanyl, but she believed that these pills did in fact contain fentanyl. Despite Scanlan's belief that these pills contained fentanyl, the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills were not advertised as containing fentanyl on TheDrugLlama account.

14. During the course of this conspiracy, between March 18, 2018 and September 5, 2018, Scanlan and Arias maintained their apartment (1455 Kettner, #905, San Diego, California) for the purpose of distributing the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills. Scanlan and Arias created TheDrugLlama account at this residence, they met with drug couriers at this residence, they received all of the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills at this residence, they filled dark web drug orders at this residence, and they packaged narcotics and printed shipping labels at this residence.

15. Arias's role in the conspiracy was to manage TheDrugLlama account. In that role, Arias assisted Scanlan in creating the dark web account. On top of that, Arias would also receive and fulfill dark web drug orders, he would purchase all of the shipping materials to mail narcotics across the country, and he would mail narcotics (including fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills) to customers throughout the United States. Arias's involvement in the conspiracy to distribute fentanyl that is charged in Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment began with the creation of TheDrugLlama dark web account. After that, Arias was actively involved in Scanlan's distribution of 1,000 fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills every week.

16. Throughout the course of this conspiracy, Daniel Wheeler would receive large amounts of fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills from Scanlan, and Wheeler would resell those pills to customers in the San Diego area. Wheeler also assisted Scanlan and Arias with the technical aspects of setting up and maintaining TheDrugLlama dark web account.

17. Scanlan and Arias made over \$100,000 from their dark web drug trafficking, and they split the drug profits evenly between themselves.

18. Following Scanlan's initial arrest on August 2, 2018, Scanlan and Arias dismantled TheDrugLlama account, and created a new dark web account on the Dream Market called "GYPSYMAJICPOTIONS." Scanlan and Arias set up this new account in order to continue selling narcotics, and they did so with the assistance of Daniel Wheeler. This new dark web account sold many of the same illegal narcotics that were previously offered for sale on TheDrugLlama account, including the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills. For this new account, Arias would store controlled substances in a storage unit controlled by himself. Daniel Wheeler also had access to Arias's storage unit. Melissa Scanlan continued to source the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills for this new account. After Scanlan received the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills for this new account, she would then provide them to Daniel Wheeler. Between August 2, 2018 and September 5, 2018, Daniel Wheeler received approximately 100 fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills every day from Scanlan. After Daniel Wheeler received the fentanyl and acetyl fentanyl pills from Scanlan, Wheeler would package those pills and ship them throughout the country. The drug proceeds from the GYPSYMAJICPOTIONS account were split into thirds and distributed to Scanlan, Arias, and Wheeler.


19. Brandon Arias stipulates that the facts set forth above prove beyond a reasonable doubt the conduct charged in Counts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the Superseding Indictment.

20. Brandon Arias stipulates that venue is proper in the Southern District of Illinois, as overt acts in furtherance of the conspiracy occurred within the district.


SO STIPULATED.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,


STEVEN WEINHOFET
United States Attorney



BRANDON ARIAS
Defendant



DEREK J. WISEMAN
Assistant United States Attorney



DAVID BRENGLE
Attorney for Defendant

Date: 07/16/2019

Date: 7-16-2019