

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
OCALA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

Case No. 5:05-cr-9-Orl-10GRJ

STEVEN MICHAEL EKBERG

PLEA AGREEMENT

A. **Particularized Terms**

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c), the United States of America, by Paul I. Perez, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, and the defendant, **STEVEN MICHAEL EKBERG**, and the attorneys for the defendant, David Mengers, Esq., and Thomas Dale, Esq., mutually agree as follows:

1. **Count Pleading To**

The defendant shall enter a plea of guilty to Count One of the Indictment. Count One charges the defendant with possession of Ricin, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 175(b).

2. **Maximum Penalties**

Count One carries a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, a term of supervised release of not more than three years, and a special assessment of \$50 per felony count for offenses committed prior to April 24, 1996, \$100 per felony count thereafter; for organizations the amounts are "\$200" and "\$400" respectively, said special assessment to be due on the date of sentencing. With

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respect to certain offenses, the Court shall order the defendant to make restitution to any victim of the offense(s), and with respect to other offenses, the Court may order the defendant to make restitution to any victim of the offense(s), or to the community, as set forth below.

3. Utilization of the Sentencing Guidelines

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c)(1)(B), the United States will recommend to the Court that the Court determine the defendant's applicable guidelines range and defendant's guidelines sentence, with any applicable departures, pursuant to the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

4. No Further Charges

If the Court accepts this plea agreement, the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida agrees not to charge defendant with committing any other federal criminal offenses known to the United States Attorney's Office at the time of the execution of this agreement, related to the conduct giving rise to this plea agreement.

5. Guidelines Sentence

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(c)(1)(B), the United States will recommend to the Court that the defendant be sentenced within the defendant's applicable guidelines range as determined by the Court pursuant to the United States Sentencing Guidelines, as adjusted by any departure the United States has agreed to recommend in this plea agreement. The parties understand that such a recommendation is not binding on the Court and that, if it is not accepted by this Court,

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neither the United States nor the defendant will be allowed to withdraw from the plea agreement, and the defendant will not be allowed to withdraw from the plea of guilty.

6. Acceptance of Responsibility - Three Levels

At the time of sentencing, and in the event that no adverse information is received suggesting such a recommendation to be unwarranted, the United States will recommend to the Court that the defendant receive a two-level downward adjustment for acceptance of responsibility, pursuant to USSG §3E1.1(a). The defendant understands that this recommendation or request is not binding on the Court, and if not accepted by the Court, the defendant will not be allowed to withdraw from the plea.

Further, at the time of sentencing, if the defendant complies with the provisions of USSG §3E1.1(b), the United States agrees to file a motion pursuant to USSG §3E1.1(b) for a downward adjustment of one additional level. The defendant understands that the determination as to whether the defendant has qualified for a downward adjustment of a third level for acceptance of responsibility rests solely with the United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, and the defendant agrees that the defendant cannot and will not challenge that determination, whether by appeal, collateral attack, or otherwise.

7. Low End

At the time of sentencing, and in the event that no adverse information is received suggesting such a recommendation to be unwarranted, the United States will recommend to the Court that the defendant receive a sentence at the low end of the applicable guideline range, as calculated by the Court. The defendant understands that

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this recommendation or request is not binding on the Court, and if not accepted by the Court, the defendant will not be allowed to withdraw from the plea.

B. Standard Terms and Conditions

1. Restitution, Special Assessment and Fine

The defendant understands and agrees that the Court, in addition to or in lieu of any other penalty, shall order the defendant to make restitution to any victim of the offense(s), pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3663A, for all offenses described in 18 U.S.C. § 3663A(c)(1) (limited to offenses committed on or after April 24, 1996); and the Court may order the defendant to make restitution to any victim of the offense(s), pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3663 (limited to offenses committed on or after November 1, 1987) or § 3579, including restitution as to all counts charged, whether or not the defendant enters a plea of guilty to such counts, and whether or not such counts are dismissed pursuant to this agreement. On each count to which a plea of guilty is entered, the Court shall impose a special assessment, to be payable to the Clerk's Office, United States District Court, and due on date of sentencing. The defendant understands that this agreement imposes no limitation as to fine.

2. Supervised Release

The defendant understands that the offense(s) to which the defendant is pleading provide(s) for imposition of a term of supervised release upon release from imprisonment, and that, if the defendant should violate the conditions of release, the defendant would be subject to a further term of imprisonment.

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3. Sentencing Information

The United States reserves its right and obligation to report to the Court and the United States Probation Office all information concerning the background, character, and conduct of the defendant, to provide relevant factual information, including the totality of the defendant's criminal activities, if any, not limited to the count(s) to which defendant pleads, to respond to comments made by the defendant or defendant's counsel, and to correct any misstatements or inaccuracies. The United States further reserves its right to make any recommendations it deems appropriate regarding the disposition of this case, subject to any limitations set forth herein, if any.

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3664(d)(3) and Fed. R. Crim. P. 32(d)(2)(A)(ii), the defendant agrees to complete and submit, upon execution of this plea agreement, an affidavit reflecting the defendant's financial condition. The defendant further agrees, and by the execution of this plea agreement, authorizes the United States Attorney's Office to provide to, and obtain from, the United States Probation Office or any victim named in an order of restitution, or any other source, the financial affidavit, any of the defendant's federal, state, and local tax returns, bank records and any other financial information concerning the defendant, for the purpose of making any recommendations to the Court and for collecting any assessments, fines, restitution, or forfeiture ordered by the Court.

4. Sentencing Recommendations

It is understood by the parties that the Court is neither a party to nor bound by this agreement. The Court may accept or reject the agreement, or defer a decision until it has had an opportunity to consider the presentence report prepared by

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the United States Probation Office. The defendant understands and acknowledges that, although the parties are permitted to make recommendations and present arguments to the Court, the sentence will be determined solely by the Court, with the assistance of the United States Probation Office. Defendant further understands and acknowledges that any discussions between defendant or defendant's attorney and the attorney or other agents for the government regarding any recommendations by the government are not binding on the Court and that, should any recommendations be rejected, defendant will not be permitted to withdraw defendant's plea pursuant to this plea agreement. The government expressly reserves the right to support and defend any decision that the Court may make with regard to the defendant's sentence, whether or not such decision is consistent with the government's recommendations contained herein.

5. Appeal of Sentence-Waiver

The defendant agrees that this Court has jurisdiction and authority to impose any sentence up to the statutory maximum and expressly waives the right to appeal defendant's sentence or to challenge it collaterally on any ground, including the ground that the Court erred in determining the applicable guidelines range pursuant to the United States Sentencing Guidelines, except (a) the ground that the sentence exceeds the defendant's applicable guidelines range as determined by the Court pursuant to the United States Sentencing Guidelines; (b) the ground that the sentence exceeds the statutory maximum penalty; or (c) the ground that the sentence violates the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution; provided, however, that if the government exercises its right to appeal the sentence imposed, as authorized by Title 18, United

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States Code, Section 3742(b), then the defendant is released from his waiver and may appeal the sentence as authorized by Title 18, United States Code, Section 3742(a).

6. Middle District of Florida Agreement

It is further understood that this agreement is limited to the Office of the United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida and cannot bind other federal, state, or local prosecuting authorities, although this office will bring defendant's cooperation, if any, to the attention of other prosecuting officers or others, if requested.

7. Filing of Agreement

This agreement shall be presented to the Court, in open court or in camera, in whole or in part, upon a showing of good cause, and filed in this cause, at the time of defendant's entry of a plea of guilty pursuant hereto.

8. Voluntariness

The defendant acknowledges that defendant is entering into this agreement and is pleading guilty freely and voluntarily without reliance upon any discussions between the attorney for the government and the defendant and defendant's attorney and without promise of benefit of any kind (other than the concessions contained herein), and without threats, force, intimidation, or coercion of any kind. The defendant further acknowledges defendant's understanding of the nature of the offense or offenses to which defendant is pleading guilty and the elements thereof, including the penalties provided by law, and defendant's complete satisfaction with the representation and advice received from defendant's undersigned counsel (if any). The defendant also understands that defendant has the right to plead not guilty or to persist in that plea if it has already been made, and that defendant has the right to

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be tried by a jury with the assistance of counsel, the right to confront and cross-examine the witnesses against defendant, the right against compulsory self-incrimination, and the right to compulsory process for the attendance of witnesses to testify in defendant's defense; but, by pleading guilty, defendant waives or gives up those rights and there will be no trial. The defendant further understands that if defendant pleads guilty, the Court may ask defendant questions about the offense or offenses to which defendant pleaded, and if defendant answers those questions under oath, on the record, and in the presence of counsel (if any), defendant's answers may later be used against defendant in a prosecution for perjury or false statement. The defendant also understands that defendant will be adjudicated guilty of the offenses to which defendant has pleaded and, if any of such offenses are felonies, may thereby be deprived of certain rights, such as the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on a jury, or to have possession of firearms.

9. Factual Basis

Defendant is pleading guilty because defendant is in fact guilty. The defendant certifies that defendant does hereby admit that the facts set forth below are true, and were this case to go to trial, the United States would be able to prove those specific facts and others beyond a reasonable doubt:

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FACTS

On January 3, 2005, the Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), received an anonymous telephone call reporting that a **STEVEN EKBERG** possessed weapons and a box full of different forms of poisons including Ricin.

On January 6, 2005, Sergeant Wayne Patch, MCSO, and Special Agent Don Maines, FDLE, interviewed the anonymous caller. The source advised **STEVEN EKBERG** possessed a cardboard box, approximately 8 inches high, 12 inches long, and 12 inches wide, with a folded flap top, that contained several vials, glass tubes and jars. The source advised that upon **STEVEN EKBERG** removing such a container from the box, **STEVEN EKBERG** stated words to the effect, "If I put this on your food, this would kill you immediately." He then picked up another container and stated words to the effect, "This would make you really sick." He then picked up another container and stated words to the effect, "This would kill you, but not right away." The source also advised that **STEVEN EKBERG** possessed approximately two books containing information on how to make poisons from household chemicals and plants.

On January 7, 2005, through the early morning hours of January 8, 2005, Don Maines, FDLE, Wayne Patch, MCSO, and Pamela Piersanti, Special Agent, FBI, met with Theresa Cecila Ekberg, the mother of **STEVEN MICHAEL EKBERG**, at her residence. Ms. Ekberg consented to a search and accompanied the officers into the bedroom.

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During the search, a cardboard box similar in dimension to that described by the source was seized from the bedroom. It was found to contain various items to include a stoppered vial containing a brown granular substance which tested positive for Ricin.

An examination of two of the suspected castor beans located within one of the thirty count zip lock bags, a sample of the husks located in the Zippo can and the brown granules located within the glass bottle. The laboratory tests conducted determined the presence of Ricin in the granules. The brown granules are not in the form of its naturally occurring state, i.e., a castor bean.

10. Entire Agreement

This plea agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the government and the defendant with respect to the aforementioned guilty plea and no other promises, agreements, or representations exist or have been made to the defendant or defendant's attorney with regard to such guilty plea.

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11. Certification

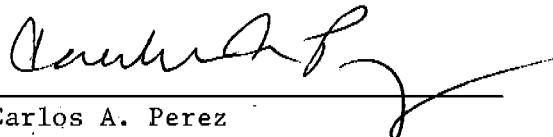
The defendant and defendant's counsel certify that this plea agreement has been read in its entirety by (or has been read to) the defendant and that defendant fully understands its terms.

DATED this 15th day of April, 2005.


PAUL I. PEREZ
United States Attorney



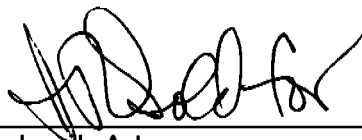
STEVEN MICHAEL EKBERG
Defendant

By: 

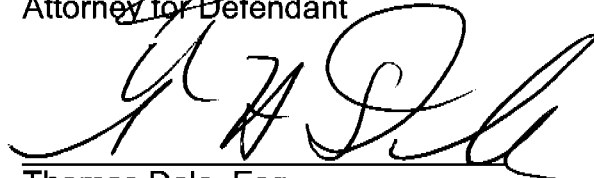
Carlos A. Perez
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