

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case No. 22-CR-247

ROBERT J. SOLBERG,

Defendant.

PLEA AGREEMENT

1. The United States of America, by its attorneys, Gregory J. Haanstad United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, and Daniel R. Humble, Assistant United States Attorney, and the defendant, Robert J. Solberg, individually and by attorney Christopher T. Froelich, pursuant to Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, enter into the following plea agreement:

CHARGES

2. The defendant has been charged in an indictment, which alleges violations of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1001(a)(2) and 3147.

3. The defendant has read and fully understands the charge contained in the indictment. He fully understands the nature and elements of the crime with which he has been charged, and the charge and the terms and conditions of the plea agreement have been fully explained to him by his attorney.

4. The defendant voluntarily agrees to plead guilty to the following count set forth in full as follows:

THE GRAND JURY CHARGES THAT:

1. On or about August 4, 2020, in the State and Eastern District of Wisconsin,

ROBERT J. SOLBERG

knowingly and willfully made materially false statements and representations within the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the United States government.

2. Namely, he falsely and fraudulently declared on a United States Small Business Administration application that he was not then subject to a felony indictment and had not pleaded guilty to any felony, when he knew, in fact, he was subject to an indictment, and had pleaded guilty to a felony on February 7, 2020, in case 19-CR-214 then pending in the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

3. The defendant was on release pursuant to an order dated December 2, 2019, from the United States District Court in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, which order notified said defendant of the potential effect of committing an offense while on pretrial release.

All violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1001(a)(2) and 3147.

5. The defendant acknowledges, understands, and agrees that he is, in fact, guilty of the offense described in paragraph 4. The parties acknowledge and understand that if this case were to proceed to trial, the government would be able to prove the following facts beyond a reasonable doubt. The defendant admits that these facts are true and correct and establish his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt:

On November 26, 2019, a five-count indictment was filed against Robert J. Solberg in the Eastern District of Wisconsin alleging odometer tampering and conspiracy. On February 7, 2020, Robert J. Solberg, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit odometer tampering. On August 4, 2020, in the State and Eastern District of Wisconsin, Solberg filed an application with the U.S. Small Business Administration (“SBA”) via the internet and answered questions 5 and 6 as follows:

If questions (5) or (6) are answered "Yes," the loan will not be approved.

	Question	Yes	No
5.	Is the Applicant (if an individual) or any individual owning 20% or more of the equity of the Applicant presently incarcerated or, for any felony, presently subject to an indictment, criminal information, arraignment, or other means by which formal criminal charges are brought in any jurisdiction? Initial here to confirm your response to question 5 → <u>JKS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.	Within the last 5 years, for any felony involving fraud, bribery, embezzlement, or a false statement in a loan application or an application for federal financial assistance, or within the last year, for any other felony, has the Applicant (if an individual) or any owner of the Applicant 1) been convicted; 2) pleaded guilty; 3) pleaded nolo contendere; or 4) commenced any form of parole or probation (including probation before judgment)? Initial here to confirm your response to question 6 → <u>JKS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Solberg's false answers to those questions were material, as the SBA would not have approved the loan had he answered truthfully.

Solberg received \$20,833 in Paycheck Protection Program ("PPP") funds which were deposited into his personal bank account.

At the time he filed the fraudulent application, Solberg was released pursuant to the Bail Reform Act of 1966 and had been notified of the effect of committing an offense while on release.

This information is provided for the purpose of setting forth a factual basis for the plea of guilty. It is not a full recitation of the defendant's knowledge of, or participation in, this offense.

PENALTIES

6. The parties understand and agree that the offense to which the defendant will enter a plea of guilty carries the following maximum term of imprisonment and fine: 5 years and \$250,000. The count also carries a mandatory special assessment of \$100 and a maximum of 3 years of supervised release. The parties further recognize that a restitution order may be entered by the court. Further, because the defendant committed the act alleged in the indictment while on release pursuant to the Bail Reform Act of 1966, the Court must impose a consecutive sentence of up to 10 years in addition to any sentence imposed on the charge in the indictment.

7. The defendant acknowledges, understands, and agrees that he has discussed the relevant statutes as well as the applicable sentencing guidelines with his attorney.

ELEMENTS

8. The parties understand and agree that in order to sustain the charge of making a false statement to the United States, while on pretrial release, as set forth in the indictment, the government must prove each of the following propositions beyond a reasonable doubt:

First, the defendant made a statement;

Second, the statement was false, fictitious, and fraudulent;

Third, the statement was material;

Fourth, the defendant acted knowingly and willfully;

Fifth, the defendant made the statement or representation in a matter within the jurisdiction of the executive branch of the United States government;

Sixth, the defendant was released pursuant to the Bail Reform Act of 1966;

Seventh, the defendant was notified of the effect of committing an offense while on release;
and

Eighth, the defendant committed the offense alleged in count one while on release.

SENTENCING PROVISIONS

9. The parties agree to waive the time limits in Fed. R. Crim. P. 32 relating to the presentence report, including that the presentence report be disclosed not less than 35 days before the sentencing hearing, in favor of a schedule for disclosure, and the filing of any objections, to be established by the court at the change of plea hearing.

10. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that any sentence imposed by the court will be pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act, and that the court will give due regard to the Sentencing Guidelines when sentencing the defendant.

11. The parties acknowledge and agree that they have discussed all of the sentencing guidelines provisions which they believe to be applicable to the offense set forth in paragraph 4. The defendant acknowledges and agrees that his attorney in turn has discussed the applicable sentencing guidelines provisions with him to the defendant's satisfaction.

12. The parties acknowledge and understand that prior to sentencing the United States Probation Office will conduct its own investigation of the defendant's criminal history. The parties further acknowledge and understand that, at the time the defendant enters a guilty plea, the parties may not have full and complete information regarding the defendant's criminal history. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that the defendant may not move to withdraw the guilty plea solely as a result of the sentencing court's determination of the defendant's criminal history.

Sentencing Guidelines Calculations

13. The defendant acknowledges and understands that the sentencing guidelines recommendations contained in this agreement do not create any right to be sentenced within any particular sentence range, and that the court may impose a reasonable sentence above or below the guideline range. The parties further understand and agree that if the defendant has provided false, incomplete, or inaccurate information that affects the calculations, the government is not bound to make the recommendations contained in this agreement.

Relevant Conduct

14. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that pursuant to Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 1B1.3, the sentencing judge may consider relevant conduct in calculating the sentencing guidelines range, even if the relevant conduct is not the subject of the offense to which the defendant is pleading guilty.

Base Offense Level

15. The parties acknowledge and understand that the government will recommend to the sentencing court that the applicable base offense level for the offense charged in the indictment is 7 under Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 2B1.1(a)(1).

Specific Offense Characteristics

16. The parties acknowledge and understand that the government will recommend to the sentencing court that a 4-level increase for loss in excess of \$15,000 under Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 2B1.1(b)(1)(C) and a 3-level increase for commission of an offense while on release under Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 3C1.3 are both applicable to the offense level for the offense charged.

Acceptance of Responsibility

17. The government agrees to recommend a two-level decrease for acceptance of responsibility as authorized by Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 3E1.1(a), but only if the defendant exhibits conduct consistent with the acceptance of responsibility.

Sentencing Recommendations

18. Both parties reserve the right to provide the district court and the probation office with any and all information which might be pertinent to the sentencing process, including but not limited to any and all conduct related to the offense as well as any and all matters which might constitute aggravating or mitigating sentencing factors.

19. Both parties reserve the right to make any recommendation regarding any and all factors pertinent to the determination of the sentencing guideline range; the fine to be imposed; the amount of restitution and the terms and condition of its payment; the length of supervised release and the terms and conditions of the release; the defendant's custodial status pending the sentencing; and any other matters not specifically addressed by this agreement.

20. The government agrees to recommend a sentence of 30 months' imprisonment comprised of 15 month's imprisonment for the offense charged in the indictment and a consecutive 15 months' imprisonment for committing the offense while on release pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 3147. The defendant is free to argue for any sentence including a probationary sentence.

Court's Determinations at Sentencing

21. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that neither the sentencing court nor the United States Probation Office is a party to or bound by this agreement. The United States Probation Office will make its own recommendations to the sentencing court. The sentencing court will make its own determinations regarding any and all issues relating to the imposition of sentence and may impose any sentence authorized by law up to the maximum penalties set forth in paragraph 6 above. The parties further understand that the sentencing court will be guided by the sentencing guidelines but will not be bound by the sentencing guidelines and may impose a reasonable sentence above or below the calculated guideline range.

22. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that the defendant may not move to withdraw the guilty plea solely as a result of the sentence imposed by the court.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

23. The defendant acknowledges and understands that any and all financial obligations imposed by the sentencing court are due and payable in full upon entry of the judgment of conviction. The defendant further understands that any payment schedule imposed by the sentencing court shall be the minimum the defendant is expected to pay and that the government's collection of any and all court imposed financial obligations is not limited to the payment schedule. The defendant agrees not to request any delay or stay in payment of any and all financial obligations. If the defendant is incarcerated, the defendant agrees to participate in

the Bureau of Prisons' Inmate Financial Responsibility Program, regardless of whether the court specifically directs participation or imposes a schedule of payments.

24. The defendant agrees to provide to the Financial Litigation Unit (FLU) of the United States Attorney's Office, upon request of the FLU during any period of probation or supervised release imposed by the court, a complete and sworn financial statement on a form provided by FLU and any documentation required by the form. The defendant further agrees, upon request of FLU whether made before or after sentencing, to promptly: cooperate in the identification of assets in which the defendant has an interest, cooperate in the liquidation of any such assets, and participate in an asset deposition.

Special Assessment

25. The defendant agrees to pay the special assessment in the amount of \$100 prior to or at the time of sentencing.

Restitution

26. The defendant agrees to pay restitution in the amount of \$20,833. The defendant understands that because restitution for the offense is mandatory, the amount of restitution shall be imposed by the court regardless of the defendant's financial resources. The defendant agrees to cooperate in efforts to collect the restitution obligation. The defendant understands that imposition or payment of restitution will not restrict or preclude the filing of any civil suit or administrative action.

DEFENDANT'S WAIVER OF RIGHTS

27. In entering this agreement, the defendant acknowledges and understands that he surrenders any claims he may have raised in any pretrial motion, as well as certain rights which include the following:

- a. If the defendant persisted in a plea of not guilty to the charges against him, he would be entitled to a speedy and public trial by a court or jury. The defendant has a right to a jury trial. However, in order that the trial be conducted by the judge sitting without a jury, the defendant, the government and the judge all must agree that the trial be conducted by the judge without a jury.
- b. If the trial is a jury trial, the jury would be composed of twelve citizens selected at random. The defendant and his attorney would have a say in who the jurors would be by removing prospective jurors for cause where actual bias or other disqualification is shown, or without cause by exercising peremptory challenges. The jury would have to agree unanimously before it could return a verdict of guilty. The court would instruct the jury that the defendant is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, as the government establishes guilt by competent evidence to the satisfaction of the jury beyond a reasonable doubt.
- c. If the trial is held by the judge without a jury, the judge would find the facts and determine, after hearing all of the evidence, whether or not he was persuaded of defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
- d. At such trial, whether by a judge or a jury, the government would be required to present witnesses and other evidence against the defendant. The defendant would be able to confront witnesses upon whose testimony the government is relying to obtain a conviction and he would have the right to cross-examine those witnesses. In turn the defendant could, but is not obligated to, present witnesses and other evidence on his own behalf. The defendant would be entitled to compulsory process to call witnesses.
- e. At such trial, defendant would have a privilege against self-incrimination so that he could decline to testify and no inference of guilt could be drawn from his refusal to testify. If defendant desired to do so, he could testify on his own behalf.

28. The defendant acknowledges and understands that by pleading guilty he is waiving all the rights set forth above. The defendant further acknowledges the fact that his attorney has explained these rights to him and the consequences of his waiver of these rights. The defendant further acknowledges that as a part of the guilty plea hearing, the court may question the defendant under oath, on the record, and in the presence of counsel about the offense to which the defendant intends to plead guilty. The defendant further understands that the

defendant's answers may later be used against the defendant in a prosecution for perjury or false statement.

29. The defendant acknowledges and understands that he will be adjudicated guilty of the offense to which he will plead guilty and thereby may be deprived of certain rights, including but not limited to the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on a jury, to possess firearms, and to be employed by a federally insured financial institution.

30. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives all claims he may have based upon the statute of limitations, the Speedy Trial Act, and the speedy trial provisions of the Sixth Amendment. The defendant agrees that any delay between the filing of this agreement and the entry of the defendant's guilty plea pursuant to this agreement constitutes excludable time under the Speedy Trial Act.

GENERAL MATTERS

31. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that this agreement does not require the government to take, or not to take, any particular position in any post-conviction motion or appeal.

32. The parties acknowledge, understand, and agree that the United States Attorney's office is free to notify any local, state, or federal agency of the defendant's conviction.

EFFECT OF DEFENDANT'S BREACH OF PLEA AGREEMENT

33. The defendant acknowledges and understands if he violates any term of this agreement at any time, engages in any further criminal activity prior to sentencing, or fails to appear for sentencing, this agreement shall become null and void at the discretion of the government. The defendant further acknowledges and understands that the government's agreement to dismiss any charge is conditional upon final resolution of this matter. If this plea agreement is revoked or if the defendant's conviction ultimately is overturned, then the

government retains the right to reinstate any and all dismissed charges and to file any and all charges which were not filed because of this agreement. The defendant hereby knowingly and voluntarily waives any defense based on the applicable statute of limitations for any charges filed against the defendant as a result of his breach of this agreement. The defendant understands, however, that the government may elect to proceed with the guilty plea and sentencing. If the defendant and his attorney have signed a proffer letter in connection with this case, then the defendant further acknowledges and understands that he continues to be subject to the terms of the proffer letter.

VOLUNTARINESS OF DEFENDANT'S PLEA

34. The defendant acknowledges, understands, and agrees that he will plead guilty freely and voluntarily because he is in fact guilty. The defendant further acknowledges and agrees that no threats, promises, representations, or other inducements have been made, nor agreements reached, other than those set forth in this agreement, to induce the defendant to plead guilty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am the defendant. I am entering into this plea agreement freely and voluntarily. I am not now on or under the influence of any drug, medication, alcohol, or other intoxicant or depressant, whether or not prescribed by a physician, which would impair my ability to understand the terms and conditions of this agreement. My attorney has reviewed every part of this agreement with me and has advised me of the implications of the sentencing guidelines. I have discussed all aspects of this case with my attorney and I am satisfied that my attorney has provided effective assistance of counsel.


Date: 5-31-23



ROBERT J. SOLBERG
Defendant

I am the defendant's attorney. I carefully have reviewed every part of this agreement with the defendant. To my knowledge, my client's decision to enter into this agreement is an informed and voluntary one.

Date: 5/31/23



CHRISTOPHER T. FROELICH
Attorney for Defendant

For the United States of America:

Date: 5/31/2023



GREGORY J. HAANSTAD
United States Attorney

Date: 5/31/2023



DANIEL R. HUMBLE
Assistant United States Attorney