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7 United States of America

8 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10
11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

12 Plaintiff,

13 v.

14 CLAUDIA GONZALES,

15 Defendant.

CASE NO. 1:25-CR-00015-KES-BAM

**PLEA AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO F.R.C.R.P.
11(C)(1)(B)**

16
17 **I. INTRODUCTION**

18 **A. Scope of Agreement**

19 The indictment in this case charges the defendant with the following violations: (Count One) 18
20 U.S.C. §§ 1201(a)(1), (c), and (g) Conspiracy to Commit a Kidnapping Involving a Child; (Count Two)
21 18 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(1), Kidnapping; and (Count Three) 18 U.S. C. §§ 1201(a)(1) and (g), Kidnapping a
22 Child. This document contains the complete plea agreement between the United States Attorney’s Office
23 for the Eastern District of California (the “government”) and the defendant regarding this case. This plea
24 agreement is limited to the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of California and cannot
25 bind any other federal, state, or local prosecuting, administrative, or regulatory authorities.

26 **B. Court Not a Party**

27 The Court is not a party to this plea agreement. Sentencing is a matter solely within the discretion
28 of the Court, and the Court may take into consideration any and all facts and circumstances concerning

1 the criminal activities of defendant, including activities that may not have been charged in the indictment.
2 The Court is under no obligation to accept any recommendations made by the government, and the Court
3 may in its discretion impose any sentence it deems appropriate up to and including the statutory maximum
4 stated in this plea agreement.

5 If the Court should impose any sentence up to the maximum established by the statute, the
6 defendant cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw her guilty plea, and she will remain bound to fulfill all
7 of the obligations under this plea agreement. The defendant understands that neither the prosecutor,
8 defense counsel, nor the Court can make a binding prediction or promise regarding the sentence she will
9 receive.

10 **II. DEFENDANT'S OBLIGATIONS**

11 **A. Guilty Plea**

12 The defendant will plead guilty to Count One, Conspiracy to Commit a Kidnapping Involving a
13 Child, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1201(a)(1), (c), and (g). The defendant agrees that she is in fact guilty
14 of these charges and that the facts set forth in the Factual Basis For Plea attached hereto as Exhibit A are
15 accurate.

16 The defendant agrees that this plea agreement will be filed with the Court and become a part of
17 the record of the case. The defendant understands and agrees that he will not be allowed to withdraw her
18 plea should the Court not follow the government's sentencing recommendations.

19 The defendant agrees that the statements made by her in signing this Agreement, including the
20 factual admissions set forth in the factual basis, shall be admissible and useable against the defendant by
21 the United States in any subsequent criminal or civil proceedings. The defendant waives any rights under
22 Rule 11(f) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and Rule 410 of the Federal Rules of Evidence, to
23 the extent that these rules are inconsistent with this paragraph or with this Agreement generally.

24 The defendant acknowledges that the crime to which she is pleading guilty is listed in 18 U.S.C.
25 § 3143(a)(2), and agrees that she will be remanded into custody upon the entry of her plea.

26 **B. Restitution.**

27 The Mandatory Victim Restitution Act requires the Court to order restitution to the victims of
28 certain offenses. Defendant agrees that her conduct is governed by the Mandatory Restitution Act pursuant

1 to 18 U.S.C. § 3663A(c)(1)(A)(i) and agrees to pay the full amount of restitution to all victims affected
2 by this offense, including, but not limited to, the victims covered in the factual basis, victims covered in
3 those counts to be dismissed as part of the plea agreement pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3663A(a)(3), and other
4 victims as a result of the defendant's conduct for the offenses charged from the periods of May 8, 2024,
5 through January 18, 2025. The amount of restitution determined by the U.S. Probation Office at
6 sentencing, but not to exceed \$75,000 dollars.

7 Defendant agrees to pay restitution to the victims of the dismissed counts pursuant 18 U.S.C. §
8 3663(a)(3) in an amount determined by the U.S. Probation Office at sentencing, but not to exceed \$75,000
9 dollars. Defendant agrees that all criminal monetary penalties imposed by the court, including restitution,
10 will be due in full immediately at time of sentencing and subject to immediate enforcement by the
11 government. Defendant agrees that any payment schedule or plan set by the court is merely a minimum
12 and does not foreclose the United States from collecting all criminal monetary penalties at any time
13 through all available means.

14 Defendant further agrees that she will not seek to discharge any restitution obligation or any part
15 of such obligation in any bankruptcy proceeding.

16 Defendant shall not sell, encumber, transfer, convey, or otherwise dispose of any of her assets
17 without prior written consent of the United States Attorney, except that the defendant may sell, transfer or
18 convey personal property (including used vehicles and personal items, but not financial instruments,
19 ownership interests in business entities or real property) with an aggregate value of less than \$5,000.

20 Payment of restitution shall be by check or money order made payable to the Clerk of the Court.
21 Defendant may pay some or all of the restitution prior to sentencing by delivery a check or money order
22 made payable to "Clerk of the Court" to:

23 Office of the Clerk
24 501 I Street, Suite 4-200
25 Sacramento, CA 95814

26 The case number should be written on the payment instrument.

27 **C. Sentencing Recommendation**

28 The defendant and her counsel may recommend whatever sentence they deem appropriate.

1 **D. Fine**

2 The parties agree that no fine is appropriate.

3 **E. Special Assessment**

4 The defendant agrees to pay a special assessment of \$100 at the time of sentencing by delivering
5 a check or money order payable to the United States District Court to the United States Probation Office
6 immediately before the sentencing hearing. If the defendant is unable to pay the special assessment at the
7 time of sentencing, she agrees to earn the money to pay the assessment, if necessary by participating in
8 the Inmate Financial Responsibility Program.

9 **F. Defendant's Violation of Plea Agreement or Withdrawal of Plea**

10 If the defendant, violates this plea agreement in any way, withdraws her plea, or tries to withdraw
11 her plea, this plea agreement is voidable at the option of the government. The government will no longer
12 be bound by its representations to the defendant concerning the limits on criminal prosecution and
13 sentencing as set forth herein. One way a defendant violates the plea agreement is to commit any crime or
14 provide any statement or testimony which proves to be knowingly false, misleading, or materially
15 incomplete. Any post-plea conduct by a defendant constituting obstruction of justice will also be a
16 violation of the agreement. The determination whether the defendant has violated the plea agreement shall
17 be decided under a probable cause standard.

18 If the defendant violates the plea agreement, withdraws her plea, or tries to withdraw her plea, the
19 government shall have the right: (1) to prosecute the defendant on any of the counts to which she pleaded
20 guilty; (2) to reinstate any counts that may be dismissed pursuant to this plea agreement; and (3) to file
21 any new charges that would otherwise be barred by this plea agreement. The defendant shall thereafter be
22 subject to prosecution for any federal criminal violation of which the government has knowledge,
23 including perjury, false statements, and obstruction of justice. The decision to pursue any or all of these
24 options is solely in the discretion of the United States Attorney's Office.

25 By signing this plea agreement, the defendant agrees to waive any objections, motions, and
26 defenses that the defendant might have to the government's decision to exercise the options stated in the
27 previous paragraph. Any prosecutions that are not time-barred by the applicable statute of limitations as
28 of the date of this plea agreement may be commenced in accordance with this paragraph, notwithstanding

1 the expiration of the statute of limitations between the signing of this plea agreement and the
2 commencement of any such prosecutions. The defendant agrees not to raise any objections based on the
3 passage of time with respect to such counts including, but not limited to, any statutes of limitation or any
4 objections based on the Speedy Trial Act or the Speedy Trial Clause of the Sixth Amendment to any
5 counts that were not time-barred as of the date of this plea agreement.

6 In addition: (1) all statements made by the defendant to the government or other designated law
7 enforcement agents, or any testimony given by the defendant before a grand jury or other tribunal, whether
8 before or after this plea agreement, shall be admissible in evidence in any criminal, civil, or administrative
9 proceedings hereafter brought against the defendant; and (2) the defendant shall assert no claim under the
10 United States Constitution, any statute, Rule 11(f) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 410
11 of the Federal Rules of Evidence, or any other federal rule, that statements made by the defendant before
12 or after this plea agreement, or any leads derived therefrom, should be suppressed. By signing this plea
13 agreement, the defendant waives any and all rights in the foregoing respects.

14 G. Asset Disclosure

15 The defendant agrees to make a full and complete disclosure of his assets and financial condition
16 and will complete the United States Attorney's Office's "Authorization to Release Information" and
17 "Financial Disclosure Statement" within three (3) weeks from the entry of the defendant's change of plea,
18 including supporting documentation. The defendant also agrees to have the Court enter an order to that
19 effect.

20 Defendant expressly authorizes the United States to immediately obtain a credit report to evaluate
21 defendant's ability to satisfy any monetary penalty imposed by the court. Defendant also authorizes the
22 U.S. Attorney's Office to inspect and copy all financial documents and information held by the U. S.
23 Probation Office.

24 III. THE GOVERNMENT'S OBLIGATIONS

25 A. Dismissals

26 The government agrees to move, at the time of sentencing, to dismiss without prejudice the
27 remaining counts in the pending indictment. The government also agrees not to reinstate any dismissed
28 count except if this agreement is voided as set forth herein, or as provided in II.E (Defendant's Violation

1 of Plea Agreement), VI.B (Guidelines Calculations), and VII.B (Waiver of Appeal) herein.

2 **B. Recommendations**

3 1. Incarceration Range

4 The government will recommend that the defendant be sentenced to the low end of the applicable
5 guideline range for her offense, including the application of the mandatory statutory minimum term, as
6 determined by the Court.

7 2. Supervised Release

8 The government will recommend that the defendant be sentenced to a term of supervised release
9 of 5 years.

10 3. Other Aspects of Sentencing

11 The government may recommend whatever it deems appropriate as to all other aspects of
12 sentencing.

13 4. Acceptance of Responsibility

14 The government will recommend a two-level reduction (if the offense level is less than 16) or a
15 three-level reduction (if the offense level reaches 16) in the computation of defendant's offense level if
16 she clearly demonstrates acceptance of responsibility for her conduct as defined in U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1. This
17 includes the defendant meeting with and assisting the probation officer in the preparation of the pre-
18 sentence report, being truthful and candid with the probation officer, and not otherwise engaging in
19 conduct that constitutes obstruction of justice within the meaning of U.S.S.G § 3C1.1, either in the
20 preparation of the pre-sentence report or during the sentencing proceeding.

21 **C. Use of Information for Sentencing**

22 The government is free to provide full and accurate information to the Court and the United States
23 Probation Office ("Probation"), including answering any inquiries made by the Court and/or Probation,
24 and rebutting any inaccurate statements or arguments by the defendant, her attorney, Probation, or the
25 Court. The defendant also understands and agrees that nothing in this Plea Agreement bars the government
26 from defending on appeal or collateral review any sentence that the Court may impose.

27 **IV. ELEMENTS OF THE OFFENSE**

28 At a trial, the government would have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the following elements

1 of the offense(s) to which the defendant is pleading guilty:

2 As to Count One, 18 U.S.C. §§ 1201(a)(1), (c), and (g) Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping
3 Involving a Child:

- 4 1. The defendant and other persons conspired to commit a kidnapping involving a child;
- 5 2. One or more persons did any overt act to effect the object of the kidnapping conspiracy.
- 6 3. The defendant or coconspirators seized, confined, inveigled, decoyed, kidnapped,
7 abducted, or carried away a kidnapped person;
- 8 4. The defendant or coconspirators held or detained the kidnapped persons against their will;
- 9 5. The defendant traveled in interstate or foreign commerce in committing the offense;
- 10 6. The victim was under 18 years old;
- 11 7. The defendant had attained the age of 18 when the offense occurred; and
- 12 8. The defendant is not a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, or an individual
13 having legal custody of the victim.

14 The defendant fully understands the nature and elements of the crimes charged in the indictment
15 to which she is pleading guilty, together with the possible defenses thereto, and has discussed them with
16 her attorney.

17 **V. MAXIMUM SENTENCE**

18 **A. Maximum Penalty**

19 The maximum sentence that the Court can impose is life and a minimum of 20 years of
20 incarceration, a fine of \$ 250,000, a five-year period of supervised release and a special assessment of
21 \$100. The charge to which defendant is pleading guilty carries a twenty-year mandatory minimum
22 sentence, absent a motion by the government for reduction pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3553(e). In addition,
23 the defendant may be ineligible for certain federal and/or state assistance and/or benefits, pursuant to 21
24 U.S.C. § 862. By signing this plea agreement, the defendant also agrees that the Court can order the
25 payment of restitution for the full loss caused by the defendant's wrongful conduct. The defendant agrees
26 that the restitution order is not restricted to the amounts alleged in the specific counts to which the
27 defendant is pleading guilty. The defendant further agrees, as noted above, that she will not attempt to
28 discharge in any present or future bankruptcy proceeding any restitution imposed by the Court.

1 **B. Violations of Supervised Release**

2 The defendant understands that if she violates a condition of supervised release at any time during
3 the term of supervised release, the Court may revoke the term of supervised release and require the
4 defendant to serve up to five years of additional imprisonment.

5 **VI. SENTENCING DETERMINATION**

6 **A. Statutory Authority**

7 The defendant understands that the Court must consult the Federal Sentencing Guidelines and must
8 take them into account when determining a final sentence. The defendant understands that the Court will
9 determine a non-binding and advisory guideline sentencing range for this case pursuant to the Sentencing
10 Guidelines and must take them into account when determining a final sentence. The defendant further
11 understands that the Court will consider whether there is a basis for departure from the guideline
12 sentencing range (either above or below the guideline sentencing range) because there exists an
13 aggravating or mitigating circumstance of a kind, or to a degree, not adequately taken into consideration
14 by the Sentencing Commission in formulating the Guidelines. The defendant further understands that the
15 Court, after consultation and consideration of the Sentencing Guidelines, must impose a sentence that is
16 reasonable in light of the factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a).

17 **VII. WAIVERS**

18 **A. Waiver of Constitutional Rights**

19 The defendant understands that by pleading guilty she is waiving the following constitutional
20 rights: (a) to plead not guilty and to persist in that plea if already made; (b) to be tried by a jury; (c) to be
21 assisted at trial by an attorney, who would be appointed if necessary; (d) to pursue any affirmative
22 defenses, Fourth Amendment or Fifth Amendment claims, constitutional challenges to the statutes of
23 conviction, and other pretrial motions that have been filed or could be filed; (e) to subpoena witnesses to
24 testify on her behalf; (f) to confront and cross-examine witnesses against her; and (g) not to be compelled
25 to incriminate herself.

26 **B. Waiver of Appeal and Collateral Attack**

27 The defendant understands that the law gives the defendant a right to appeal her guilty plea,
28 conviction, and sentence. The defendant agrees as part of her plea/pleas, however, to give up the right to

1 appeal any aspect of the guilty plea, conviction, or the sentence imposed in this case. The defendant
2 understands that this waiver includes, but is not limited to, any and all constitutional and/or legal
3 challenges to the defendant's conviction and guilty plea, including arguments that the statutes to which
4 defendant is pleading guilty are unconstitutional, and any and all claims that the statement of facts attached
5 to this agreement is insufficient to support the defendant's plea of guilty. The defendant specifically gives
6 up the right to appeal any order of restitution the Court may impose.

7 Notwithstanding the defendant's waiver of appeal, the defendant will retain the right to appeal if
8 one of the following circumstances occurs: (1) the sentence imposed by the District Court exceeds the
9 statutory maximum; and/or (2) the government appeals the sentence in the case. The defendant
10 understands that these circumstances occur infrequently and that in almost all cases this Agreement
11 constitutes a complete waiver of all appellate rights.

12 In addition, regardless of the sentence the defendant receives, the defendant also gives up any right
13 to bring a collateral attack, including a motion under 28 U.S.C. § 2255 or § 2241, challenging any aspect
14 of the guilty plea, conviction, or sentence imposed in this case, except for non-waivable claims.

15 Notwithstanding the agreement in paragraph III.A (Dismissals) above that the government will
16 move to dismiss counts against the defendant, if the defendant ever attempts to vacate her plea, dismiss
17 the underlying charges, or modify or set aside her sentence on any of the counts to which she is pleading
18 guilty, the government shall have the rights set forth in paragraph II.E (Defendant's Violation of Plea
19 Agreement) herein.

20 **C. Waiver of Attorneys' Fees and Costs**

21 The defendant agrees to waive all rights under the "Hyde Amendment," Section 617, P.L. 105-119
22 (Nov. 26, 1997), to recover attorneys' fees or other litigation expenses in connection with the investigation
23 and prosecution of all charges in the above-captioned matter and of any related allegations (including
24 without limitation any charges to be dismissed pursuant to this plea agreement and any charges previously
25 dismissed).

26 **VIII. ENTIRE PLEA AGREEMENT**

27 Other than this plea agreement, no agreement, understanding, promise, or condition between the
28 government and the defendant exists, nor will such agreement, understanding, promise, or condition exist

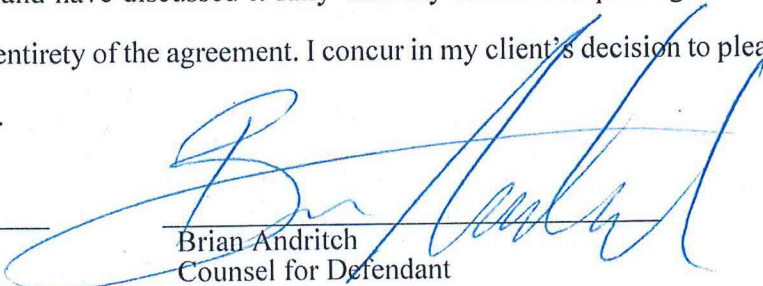
1 unless it is committed to writing and signed by the defendant, counsel for the defendant, and counsel for
2 the United States.

3 **IX. APPROVALS AND SIGNATURES**

4 **A. Defense Counsel**

5 I have read this plea agreement and have discussed it fully with my client. The plea agreement
6 accurately and completely sets forth the entirety of the agreement. I concur in my client's decision to plead
7 guilty as set forth in this plea agreement.

8 Dated: 2-5-26

9 
10 Brian Andritch
Counsel for Defendant

11 **B. Defendant**

12 I have read this plea agreement and carefully reviewed every part of it with my attorney. I
13 understand it, and I voluntarily agree to it. Further, I have consulted with my attorney and fully understand
14 my rights with respect to the provisions of the Sentencing Guidelines that may apply to my case. No other
15 promises or inducements have been made to me, other than those contained in this plea agreement. In
16 addition, no one has threatened or forced me in any way to enter into this plea agreement. Finally, I am
17 satisfied with the representation of my attorney in this case.

18 Dated: 2/5/26

19 
20 CLAUDIA GONZALES, Defendant

21 **C. Attorney for the United States**

22 I accept and agree to this plea agreement on behalf of the government.

23 Dated: February 5, 2026

24 MICHELE BECKWITH
Acting United States Attorney

25 By: 

26 CODY S. CHAPPLE
27 ROBERT VENEMAN-HUGHES
Assistant United States Attorney

EXHIBIT A

Factual Basis for Plea

If this matter proceeded to trial, the United States would establish the following facts beyond a reasonable doubt:

Between May 9, 2024, and January 21, 2025, in the Eastern District of California and elsewhere, there was an agreement between two or more persons to kidnap victims Victim 1 and Victim 2. The defendant joined in the agreement knowing of its purpose and intending to help accomplish it. One or more persons acted to affect the object of the conspiracy. Victim 2 was under 18 years old and unrelated to the defendant.

Specifically, between May 8, 2024, and May 9, 2024, Claudia Gonzales agreed with Rosa Ventura to kidnap Victim 1 and Victim 2. On May 8, 2024, Ventura separated Victim 1 from her infant child and inveigled the Victims into Ventura's car under the false promise that they were going to pick up Victim 1's child. Instead, Ventura drove the victims to an unknown field outside Fresno where Gonzales revealed herself and sat in the front passenger seat. The two then held both victims in the backseat of the car while Ventura drove to the U.S.-Mexico border. At one point, they stopped at a gas station where both victims tried to flee. Gonzales caught Victim 2, forcing them back into the car. Gonzales then helped Ventura catch Victim 1 and forced them back into the car by using a stun gun.

Ventura and Gonzales then transported the Victims across the border into Tijuana, Mexico where they abandoned the victims. Ventura and Gonzales then drove back to Fresno on May 9, 2024. Victim 1's child was kept in Fresno out of Victim 1's custody until November 2024. Victim 2 was under 18 years old and was not related to Gonzales at the time of the kidnapping.

I, CLAUDIA GONZALES, have read the Factual Basis for Plea and agree to the facts and stipulations contained therein.

Dated: 2/5/26


CLAUDIA GONZALES, Defendant