

United States District Court
Eastern District of Michigan
Northern Division

United States of America,

Plaintiff,

Case No. 22-20031

v.

Hon. Thomas Ludington

Christopher Ridenour,

Defendant.

Plea Agreement

The United States of America and the defendant, Christopher Ridenour, have reached a plea agreement under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11. The plea agreement's terms are:

1. Count of Conviction

The defendant will plead guilty to Count 1 of the Indictment. Count 1 charges the defendant with Conspiracy to Manufacture and Deal in Silencers under 18 U.S.C. § 371 and 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(1)(A).

2. Statutory Minimum and Maximum Penalties

The defendant understands that the count to which he is pleading guilty carries the following minimum and maximum statutory penalties:

Count 1	Term of imprisonment:	Up to 5 years
	Fine:	Up to \$250,000.00
	Term of supervised release:	Up to 3 years

3. Elements of Count of Conviction

The elements of Count 1 are:

- 1.) That two or more people conspired or agreed to manufacture and deal in silencers, without the necessary FFL (“Federal Firearms License”).
- 2.) That Defendant knowingly and voluntarily joined the conspiracy, aware of its objects and intending to further them.
- 3.) That at least one of the overt acts contained in the indictment was committed by a member of the conspiracy, to further the conspiracy.

4. Factual Basis

The parties agree that the following facts are true, accurately describe the defendant’s role in the offenses, and provide a sufficient factual basis for the defendant’s guilty plea:

Between some time in 2017 up to *and* including December, 2020, Christopher RIDENOUR, a resident of National City, Michigan, was in the business of manufacturing and selling silencer kits and silencer components without the necessary FFL (Federal Firearms License).

RIDENOUR operated his business from a pole barn at his home in National City, Michigan, dba as “Diversified Machine.” RIDENOUR had a Diversified Machine website which advertised and operated to sell his silencer kits and components online.

Diversified Machine was a full-blown silencer manufacturing operation in RIDENOUR’s pole barn, involving thousands of silencer components including cylinders, baffles, spacers, monocoresh, endcaps and muzzle breaks.

Co-conspirator Cullen Swanson agreed to assist RIDENOUR by testing RIDENOUR’s silencers and by modifying some of RIDENOUR’s silencer component parts to improve (lower) the silencer decibel level and improve the point of impact when a firearm was discharged using one of RIDENOUR’s silencers. in furtherance of his testing of RIDENOUR’s silencers and silencer parts, Swanson

created video reviews, some of which he posted on YouTube for consumers to watch.

To further the conspiracy, Defendant Christopher Ridenour committed overt acts such as on June 9, 2018, during and in furtherance of the conspiracy, Defendant CHRISTOPHER RIDENOUR texted co-conspirator Cullen Swanson and said that Swanson's "double scoop cones" - which were RIDENOUR's cones modified (drilled out) by SWANSON- were "fantastic," thereby approving of the modification of Ridenour's component silencer parts for sale.

Defendant Nick LOGAN agreed to assist RIDENOUR by serving as Diversified Machine ("DM") customer support. Diversified Machine customers reached LOGAN through a DM support email link to inquire as to the status of orders or to ask questions about DM products. LOGAN would often in turn inquire of RIDENOUR, via text or email.

RIDENOUR and his co-conspirator and customer service representative Defendant Nick LOGAN referred to their silencer kits as "solvent traps" in an attempt to avoid law enforcement detection.

DM business was an online business only; RIDENOUR shipped silencer kits and parts to customers nationwide.

5. Advice of Rights

The defendant has read the Indictment, has discussed the charges and possible defenses with his attorney, and understands the crimes charged. The defendant understands that, by pleading guilty, he is waiving many important rights, including the following:

- A. The right to plead not guilty and to persist in that plea;
- B. The right to a speedy and public trial by jury;
- C. The right to be represented by counsel—and, if necessary, have the court appoint counsel—at trial;
- D. The right to be presumed innocent and to require the government to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt at trial;
- E. The right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses at trial;
- F. The right to testify or not to testify at trial, whichever the defendant chooses;

G. If the defendant chooses not to testify at trial, the right to have the jury informed that it may not treat that choice as evidence of guilt;

H. The right to present evidence or not to present evidence at trial, whichever the defendant chooses; and

I. The right to compel the attendance of witnesses at trial.

6. Collateral Consequences of Conviction

The defendant understands that his convictions here may carry additional consequences under federal or state law. The defendant understands that, if he is not a United States citizen, his convictions here may require him to be removed from the United States, denied citizenship, and denied admission to the United States in the future.

The defendant further understands that the additional consequences of his convictions here may include, but are not limited to, adverse effects on the defendant's immigration status, naturalized citizenship, right to vote, right to carry a firearm, right to serve on a jury, and ability to hold certain licenses or to be employed in certain fields. The defendant understands that no one, including the defendant's attorney or the Court, can predict to a certainty what the additional consequences of

the defendant's convictions might be. The defendant nevertheless affirms that the defendant chooses to plead guilty regardless of any immigration or other consequences from his convictions.

7. Safety Valve

The parties agree that the defendant is not eligible for the safety valve in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(f).

8. Defendant's Guideline Range

A. Court's Determination

The Court will determine the defendant's guideline range at sentencing.

B. Acceptance of Responsibility

The government recommends under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(B) that the defendant receive a two-level reduction for acceptance of responsibility under USSG § 3E1.1(a) for his guideline calculation on Count 1. Further, if the defendant's offense level is 16 or greater and the defendant is awarded the two-level reduction under USSG § 3E1.1(a), the government recommends that the defendant receive an additional one-level reduction for acceptance of responsibility under USSG § 3E1.1(b).] If, however, the government learns that the defendant has engaged in any conduct inconsistent with acceptance of

responsibility—including, but not limited to, making any false statement to, or withholding information from, his probation officer; obstructing justice in any way; denying his guilt on the offense(s) to which he is pleading guilty; committing additional crimes after pleading guilty; or otherwise demonstrating a lack of acceptance of responsibility as defined in USSG § 3E1.1—the government will be released from its obligations under this paragraph, will be free to argue that the defendant not receive *any* reduction for acceptance of responsibility under USSG § 3E1.1, and will be free to argue that the defendant receive an enhancement for obstruction of justice under USSG § 3C1.1.

C. Other Guideline Recommendations

The parties have no other recommendations as to the defendant's guideline calculation.

D. Parties' Obligations

Both the defendant and the government agree not to take any position or make any statement that is inconsistent with any of the guideline recommendations or factual stipulations in paragraphs 8.B, 8.C, or 8.D. Neither party is otherwise restricted in what it may argue or present to the Court as to the defendant's guideline calculation.

F. Not a Basis to Withdraw

The defendant understands that he will have no right to withdraw from this agreement or withdraw his guilty plea if he disagrees, in any way, with the guideline range determined by the Court, even if that guideline range does not incorporate the parties' recommendations or factual stipulations in paragraphs 8.B, 8.C, or 8.D. The government likewise has no right to withdraw from this agreement if it disagrees with the guideline range determined by the Court.

9. Imposition of Sentence

A. Court's Obligation

The defendant understands that in determining his sentence, the Court must calculate the applicable guideline range at sentencing and must consider that range, any possible departures under the sentencing guidelines, and the sentencing factors listed in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a), and apply any applicable mandatory minimums.

B. Imprisonment

1. Recommendation

Under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(B), the government recommends that the defendant's sentence of imprisonment

on Count 1 not exceed the midpoint of the defendant's guideline range as determined by the Court

2. No Right to Withdraw

The government's recommendation in paragraph 9.B.1 is not binding on the Court. The defendant understands that he will have no right to withdraw from this agreement or withdraw his guilty plea if the Court decides not to follow the government's recommendation. The government likewise has no right to withdraw from this agreement if the Court decides not to follow the government's recommendation. If however, the Court rejects or purports to reject any other term or terms of this plea agreement, the government will be permitted to withdraw from the agreement.

C. Supervised Release

1. Recommendation

Under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(B), the parties recommend that the Court impose a three-year term of supervised release.

2. No Right to Withdraw

The parties' recommendation is not binding on the Court. The defendant understands that he will have no right to withdraw from this

agreement or withdraw his guilty plea if the Court decides not to follow the parties' recommendation. The defendant also understands that the government's recommendation concerning the length of the defendant's sentence of imprisonment, as described above in paragraph 9.B.1, will not apply to or limit any term of imprisonment that results from any later revocation of the defendant's supervised release.

D. Fines

There is no recommendation or agreement as to a fine.

E. Forfeiture

Defendant agrees to administratively forfeit any interest he may have in any firearms, silencers, silencer component parts, and ammunition used or intended to be used in the commission of Count One including all firearms (including silencers and silencer parts) that were seized by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

In entering into this agreement with respect to forfeiture, Defendant expressly waives his right to have a jury determine the forfeitability of his interest in the above-described property as provided by Rule 32.2(b)(5) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Defendant knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently waives any challenge to the above-described forfeiture based on the Excessive Fines Clause of the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Defendant further waives the requirements of Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure 32.2 and 43(a) regarding notice of forfeiture in the charging instrument, announcement of forfeiture at sentencing, and incorporation of forfeiture in the judgment.

Defendant acknowledges that he understands that forfeiture of the above-described assets is part of the sentence that may be imposed in this case and waives his right to challenge any failure by the court to advise him of this, pursuant to Rule 11(b)(1)(J), at the time his guilty plea is accepted.

G. Special Assessment

The defendant understands that he will be required to pay a special assessment of \$100.00, due immediately upon sentencing.

10. Appeal Waiver

The defendant waives any right he may have to appeal his conviction on any grounds. If the defendant's sentence of imprisonment does not exceed the top of the guideline range as determined by the

court on Count 1, the defendant also waives any right he may have to appeal his sentence on any grounds.

11. Collateral Review Waiver

The defendant retains the right to raise claims alleging ineffective assistance of counsel or prosecutorial misconduct, as long as the defendant properly raises those claims by collateral review under 28 U.S.C. § 2255. The defendant also retains the right to pursue any relief permitted under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c), as long as the defendant properly files a motion under that section. The defendant, however, waives any other right he[she] may have to challenge his conviction or sentence by collateral review, including, but not limited to, any right he may have to challenge his conviction or sentence on any grounds under 28 U.S.C. § 2255 (except for properly raised ineffective assistance of counsel or prosecutorial misconduct claims, as described above), 28 U.S.C. § 2241, or Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 59 or 60.

12. Consequences of Withdrawal of Guilty Plea or Vacation of Judgment

If the defendant is allowed to withdraw his guilty pleas, or if the defendant's conviction or sentence under this agreement is vacated, the government may reinstate any charges against the defendant that were

dismissed as part of this agreement and may file additional charges against the defendant relating, directly or indirectly, to any of the conduct underlying the defendant's guilty plea or any relevant conduct.

If the government reinstates any charges or files any additional charges as permitted by this paragraph, the defendant waives his right to challenge those charges on the ground that they were not filed in a timely manner, including any claim that they were filed after the limitations period expired.

13. Use of Withdrawn Guilty Plea

The defendant agrees that if he is permitted to withdraw his guilty plea for any reason, he waives all of his rights under Federal Rule of Evidence 410, and the government may use his guilty plea, any statement that the defendant made at his guilty plea hearing, and the factual basis set forth in this agreement, against the defendant in any proceeding.

14. Parties to Plea Agreement

This agreement does not bind any government agency except the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan.

15. Scope of Plea Agreement

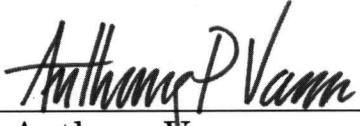
This plea agreement is the complete agreement between the parties and supersedes any other promises, representations, understandings, or agreements between the parties concerning the subject matter of this agreement that were made at any time before the guilty plea is entered in court. Thus, no oral or written promises made by the government to the defendant or to the attorney for the defendant at any time before the defendant pleads guilty are binding except to the extent they have been explicitly incorporated into this plea agreement. If the parties have entered, or subsequently enter, into a written proffer or cooperation agreement, though, this plea agreement does not supersede or abrogate the terms of that agreement. This plea agreement also does not prevent any civil or administrative actions against the defendant, or any forfeiture claim against any property, by the United States or any other party.

16. Acceptance of Agreement by Defendant

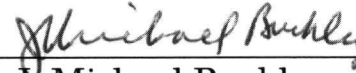
This plea offer expires unless it has been received, fully signed, in the United States Attorney's Office by 5:00 pm on February 28, 2022.

The government may withdraw from this agreement at any time before the defendant pleads guilty.

Dawn N. Ison
United States Attorney




Anthony Vance
Chief, Branch Offices
Assistant United States
Attorney




J. Michael Buckley
Deputy Chief, Branch Offices
Assistant United States
Attorney

Dated: April 18, 2022

By signing below, the defendant and his attorney agree that the defendant has read or been read this entire document, has discussed it with his attorney, and has had a full and complete opportunity to confer with his[her] attorney. The defendant further agrees that he understands this entire document, agrees to its terms, has had all of his questions answered by his attorney, and is satisfied with his attorney's advice and representation.



Keith Corbett
Attorney for Defendant



Christopher Ridenour
Defendant

Dated: