

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

**Case No. 16-CR-20602-Middlebrooks**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**vs.**

**WILTER BLANCO RUIZ,**

**Defendant.**

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**PLEA AGREEMENT**

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida ("this Office") and WILTER BLANCO RUIZ (hereinafter referred to as the "defendant") enter into the following agreement:

1. The defendant agrees to plead guilty to the sole charge in the Indictment, which count charges that from in or about January 1999 to in or about the date of the Indictment, in the countries of Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and elsewhere, the defendant did knowingly and willfully conspire to distribute a controlled substance, specifically 5 kilograms or more of a substance containing cocaine, knowing that such substance would be unlawfully imported into the United States, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 959 and 963.

2. The defendant is aware that the sentence will be imposed by the Court after considering the advisory Federal Sentencing Guidelines and Policy Statements (hereinafter "Sentencing Guidelines"). The defendant acknowledges and understands that the Court will compute an advisory sentence under the Sentencing Guidelines and that the applicable guidelines will be determined by the Court relying in part on the results of a pre-sentence investigation by the Court's probation office, which investigation will commence after the guilty plea has been entered. The

defendant is also aware that, under certain circumstances, the Court may depart from the advisory Sentencing Guidelines range that it has computed, and may raise or lower that advisory sentence under the Sentencing Guidelines. The defendant is further aware and understands that the Court is required to consider the advisory guideline range determined under the Sentencing Guidelines, but is not bound to impose a sentence within that advisory range; the Court is permitted to tailor the ultimate sentence in light of other statutory concerns, and such sentence may be either more severe or less severe than the Sentencing Guidelines' advisory range. Knowing these facts, the defendant understands and acknowledges that the Court has the authority to impose any sentence within and up to the statutory maximum authorized by law for the offenses identified in paragraph 1 and that the defendant may not withdraw the plea solely as a result of the sentence imposed.

3. The defendant also understands and acknowledges that the Court may impose a statutory maximum term of imprisonment of up to life imprisonment and must impose a statutory minimum term of 10 years' imprisonment, followed by a term of supervised release of at least 5 years and up to a lifetime of supervised release. In addition to a term of imprisonment and supervised release, the Court may impose a fine of up to \$10,000,000.

4. The defendant further understands and acknowledges that, in addition to any sentence imposed under paragraph 3 of this agreement, a special assessment in the amount of \$100 will be imposed on the defendant. The defendant agrees that any special assessment imposed shall be paid at the time of sentencing. If the defendant is financially unable to pay the special assessment, the defendant agrees to present evidence to this Office and the Court at the time of sentencing as to the reasons for the defendant's failure to pay.

5. This Office reserves the right to inform the Court and the probation office of all facts pertinent to the sentencing process, including all relevant information concerning the offenses committed, whether charged or not, as well as concerning the defendant and the defendant's background. Subject only to the express terms of any agreed-upon sentencing recommendations contained in this agreement, this Office further reserves the right to make any recommendation as to the quality and quantity of punishment.

6. This Office agrees that it will recommend at sentencing that the Court reduce by two levels the Sentencing Guidelines level applicable to the defendant's offense, pursuant to Section 3E1.1(a) of the Sentencing Guidelines, based upon the defendant's recognition and affirmative and timely acceptance of personal responsibility. If at the time of sentencing the defendant's offense level is determined to be 16 or greater, this Office will file a motion requesting an additional one level decrease pursuant to Section 3E1.1(b) of the Sentencing Guidelines, stating that the defendant has assisted authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the defendant's own misconduct by timely notifying authorities of the defendant's intention to enter a plea of guilty, thereby permitting the government to avoid preparing for trial and permitting the government and the Court to allocate their resources efficiently. This Office, however, will not be required to make this motion and this recommendation if the defendant: (1) fails or refuses to make a full, accurate and complete disclosure to the probation office of the circumstances surrounding the relevant offense conduct; (2) is found to have misrepresented facts to the government prior to entering into this plea agreement; or (3) commits any misconduct after entering into this plea agreement, including but not limited to committing a state or federal offense,

violating any term of release, or making false statements or misrepresentations to any governmental entity or official.

7. This Office and the defendant agree that, although not binding on the probation office or the Court, they will jointly recommend that the Court make the following findings and conclusions as to the sentence to be imposed:

(a) That the quantity of cocaine involved in the offense, for purposes of Section 2D1.1(a) and (c) of the Sentencing Guidelines, is at least 1,000 kilograms; and

(b) That the defendant's role in the offense, for purposes of Section 3B1.1(a) of the Sentencing Guidelines, is that of an organizer or leader of criminal activity that involved five or more participants;

8. The defendant is aware that the sentence has not yet been determined by the Court. The defendant also is aware that any estimate of the probable sentencing range or sentence that the defendant may receive, whether that estimate comes from the defendant's attorney, this Office, or the probation office, is a prediction, not a promise, and is not binding on this Office, the probation office or the Court. The defendant understands further that any recommendation that this Office makes to the Court as to sentencing, whether pursuant to this agreement or otherwise, is not binding on the Court and the Court may disregard the recommendation in its entirety. The defendant understands and acknowledges, as previously acknowledged in paragraph 2 above, that the defendant may not withdraw his plea based upon the Court's decision not to accept a sentencing recommendation made by the defendant, this Office, or a recommendation made jointly by the defendant and this Office.

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9. The defendant also agrees to assist this Office in all proceedings, whether administrative or judicial, involving the forfeiture to the United States of all rights, title, and interest, regardless of their nature or form, in all assets, including real and personal property, cash and other monetary instruments, wherever located, which the defendant or others to the defendant's knowledge have accumulated as a result of illegal activities. Such assistance will involve the defendant's agreement to the entry of an order enjoining the transfer or encumbrance of assets that may be identified as being subject to forfeiture, including but not limited to those specific real and personal properties set forth in the forfeiture counts of the indictment. Additionally, the defendant agrees to identify as being subject to forfeiture all such assets, and to assist in the transfer of such property to the United States by delivery to this Office upon this Office's request, all necessary and appropriate documentation with respect to said assets, including consents to forfeiture, quit claim deeds and any and all other documents necessary to deliver good and marketable title to said property. The defendant further agrees to forfeit to the United States voluntarily and immediately all of the defendant's right, title and interest to any and all assets, and/or their substitutes which are subject to forfeiture pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily agrees to waive any claim or defense the defendant may have under the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution, including any claim of excessive fine or penalty with respect to the forfeited asset(s).

10. The defendant is aware that Title 18, United States Code, Section 3742 and Title 28, United States Code, Section 1291 afford the defendant the right to appeal the sentence imposed in this case. Acknowledging this, in exchange for the undertakings made by the United States in this plea agreement, the defendant hereby waives all rights conferred by Sections 3742 and 1291

to appeal any sentence imposed, including any restitution order, or to appeal the manner in which the sentence was imposed, unless the sentence exceeds the maximum permitted by statute or is the result of an upward departure and/or an upward variance from the advisory guideline range that the Court establishes at sentencing. The defendant further understands that nothing in this agreement shall affect the government's right and/or duty to appeal as set forth in Title 18, United States Code, Section 3742(b) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 1291. However, if the United States appeals the defendant's sentence pursuant to Sections 3742(b) and 1291, the defendant shall be released from the above waiver of appellate rights. By signing this agreement, the defendant acknowledges that the defendant has discussed the appeal waiver set forth in this agreement with the defendant's attorney.

11. The defendant recognizes that pleading guilty may have consequences with respect to the defendant's immigration status if the defendant is not a citizen of the United States. Under federal law, a broad range of crimes are removable offenses, including the offense to which the defendant is pleading guilty. Indeed, because the defendant is pleading guilty to narcotics trafficking, removal is presumptively mandatory. The defendant knowingly and voluntarily consents to removal from the United States following completion of his sentence, waives any rights relating to any and all forms of relief from removal or exclusion, agrees to abandon any pending applications for such relief, and agrees to cooperate with the Department of Homeland Security during removal proceedings.

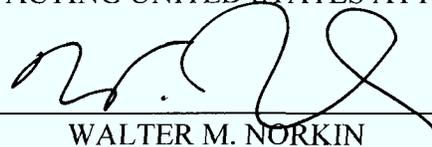
12. This is the entire agreement and understanding between this Office and the defendant.

There are no other agreements, promises, representations, or understandings.

BENJAMIN G. GREENBERG  
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Date: 5-31-17

By:



WALTER M. NORKIN  
ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY

Date: 5-31-17

By:



VICTOR ROCHA, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT

Date: 5-31-17

By:



WILTER BLANCO RUIZ  
DEFENDANT