

JP:JEG

06- 132M

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

COMPLAINT AND AFFIDAVIT
IN SUPPORT OF ARREST
WARRANT

- against -

(18 U.S.C. § 545)

MAMIE MANNEH,

Defendant.

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EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, SS:

Philip J. Alegranti, being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a Special Agent of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS"), duly appointed according to law and acting as such.

Upon information and belief, on or about January 9, 2006, within the Eastern District of New York and elsewhere, the defendant MAMIE MANNEH, did fraudulently and knowingly import and bring into the United States merchandise, to wit: bushmeat, which included species listed on Appendix I or Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ("CITES"), and prohibited from importation by Title 16, United States Code Section 1538(c) and 50 C.F.R. 23.11(b)(1) without first obtaining a valid foreign export permit or re-export certificate as required by 50 C.F.R. 23.12(a)(2),

and without first filing a completed Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish and Wildlife (Form 3-177), as required by 50 C.F.R. 14.61.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 545)

The source of your deponent's information and the grounds for his belief are as follows¹:

BACKGROUND

1. The term bushmeat is an all encompassing term used in Africa to describe the meat of wildlife species that have been taken from the wild. It can be used to describe meat from the smallest of species, such as rodents, to the largest of game animals, such as elephants. Many of the species consumed as bushmeat are protected by foreign law, the Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ("CITES"). CITES recognized the detrimental impacts caused by the commercialization of bushmeat by forming the Bushmeat Working Group ("BWG"), an international coalition, to examine issues raised by the trade in bushmeat. The BWG reported that there was clear evidence that the trade in bushmeat was being conducted in an unsustainable fashion and in contravention of national and international law.

¹ Because the purpose of this Complaint and Affidavit is to state only probable cause to arrest, I have not described all the relevant facts and circumstances of which I am aware.

2. In addition to the impact on wild species, bushmeat poses significant health risks to domestic and wild animal populations in the United States through the introduction of exotic animal diseases. Numerous sources also point out the potential health risks to humans linking bushmeat to diseases such as Lassa Fever, Ebola, HIV, SARS and Monkeypox.

3. It has been the experience of your affiant that concealing bushmeat in smoked fish shipments from Africa is a recognized method of smuggling bushmeat.

THE INVESTIGATION

4. On or about January 9, 2006, an air cargo shipment consisting of twelve (12) boxes weighing a total of approximately 327 kilograms arrived at JFK International Airport aboard Royal Air Maroc, under Airway Bill #147-6744 6665. According to the airway bill, the shipment originated out of Conakry, Republic of Guinea, and was consigned to MAMIE MANNEH, Staten Island, New York. According to the manifest, MANNEH hired the freight forwarder CargoHut, Inc. to facilitate the entry of the shipment. A licensed customs broker was hired to obtain clearance of the goods by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection("CBP"). The broker submitted entry form number AGT-0002128-8 to Customs. The entry identified the ultimate consignee as "MANNEH, MAMIE, 239 Bement Avenue, Staten

Island, NY 10310." MANNEH's Social Security Number was listed. The Description of the Merchandise was "12 CTN AFRICAN DRESSES & SMOKED FISH" with a total value of "780."

5. On January 12, 2006, U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") Agriculture Specialists conducted an inspection of the cargo shipment at JFK International Airport. In one of the boxes, CBP Agriculture Specialists found what they believed to be primate parts. CBP halted their inspection and contacted the USFWS, Valley Stream office.

6. USFWS personnel, including your affiant, responded to CBP's referral at JFK International Airport on January 12, 2006. Your affiant observed 12 cardboard boxes. On the top of each box was hand-printed writing which read as follows:

"147-67446665
MAMIE MANNEH
139 BEMENT AVE.
STATER ISLAND
718-876-8707"

7. Inside several of the boxes, USFWS Inspectors found, among other things, smoked bushmeat. The bushmeat was found in multiple boxes of the shipments and was commingled with smoked fish. The bushmeat was concealed under the top layers of smoked fish.

8. The USFWS found and seized 65 pieces of bushmeat from the shipment. Your affiant readily recognized skulls, limbs

and torsos of non-human primate species. A hoof and leg were found belonging to a small ungulate, possibly a "duiker."² A variety of other mammalian parts were found containing sections of rib cages, and other bones.

9. At approximately 9:45 a.m. on January 13, 2006, your affiant spoke by telephone with an employee of CargoHut, the company providing freight forwarding services for the shipment. The CargoHut employee advised your affiant that he had called MANNEH and informed her that USFWS was holding the shipment, and that CargoHut's services had been utilized by MANNEH on two previous occasions. The two previous shipments had also originated out of Guinea, and had been delivered to MANNEH in Staten Island by a CargoHut employee. CargoHut provided MANNEH's address as 239 Bement Ave, Staten Island, New York.

10. At approximately 10:00 a.m. on January 13, 2006, your affiant contacted MANNEH at her home phone, (718) 876-0707. Your affiant identified himself to MANNEH. MANNEH confirmed that she had spoken with an employee of CargoHut and was aware that a problem existed with her shipment from Guinea. MANNEH agreed to meet the USFWS agents at her home.

11. On January 13, 2005, your affiant interviewed MANNEH at her home located at 239 Bement Avenue, Staten Island, New York.

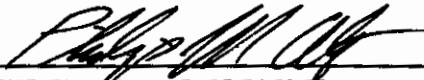
² A duiker is a small to medium size antelope.

MANNEH stated she ran a business, operated from her home address, importing and reselling smoked fish from Africa. MANNEH acknowledged ordering and paying for the shipment but denied requesting or knowing in advance about the bushmeat concealed in the shipment. MANNEH faulted the exporter in Africa, who she identified as her cousin. MANNEH stated that she had eaten bushmeat while visiting family in Liberia but had never seen African bushmeat in the United States.

12. MANNEH consented in writing to a search of the detached garage on her property. During the search of the garage, your deponent found several commercial volumes of smoked African fish and bushmeat. Some of the bushmeat was concealed within a black trash bag. Other bushmeat was found in a box behind several other items which Manneh had moved in your deponent's presence. When confronted with the discovery, MANNEH identified a primate arm as "monkey" and acknowledged the bushmeat was from Africa and had been illegally imported to the United States. MANNEH stated that she had received the bushmeat from an individual in Minnesota.

WHEREFORE, the deponent respectfully requests that an

arrest warrant be issued for the defendant MAMIE MANNEH so that she may be dealt with according to law.



PHILIP J. ALEGRANTI
Special Agent
United States Fish and Wildlife
Service

Sworn to before me this
3rd day of February, 2006

UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK