

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
ATHENS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	:
	:
v.	: CASE NO. 3:21-CR-39(CAR)
	:
ALBERT ROSS	: VIOLATION(S):
RICHARD CORNELIUS	: 21 U.S.C. § 846
ERIC MORGAN	: 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1)
LONNIE BENNETT	: 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(A)(ii)(II)
BRANDON PAYNE	: 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(B)(iii),
BERNARD WILCOX	: 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(C)
TAMICHAEL DARDEN	: 18 U.S.C. § 924(d)(1)
MILLER SUTTON	: 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)
REGINALD BATTLE, SR.	: 21 U.S.C. § 853
HAFEZ ABDULLAHI	:
DANNY SIMS	:
COREY MITCHELL	:
	:
Defendants.	

**ORDER ON JOINT MOTION TO CONTINUE TRIAL**

Currently before the Court is a Joint Motion to Continue [Doc. 309] the trial of this case set for January 23, 2022. On September 15, 2021, the Grand Jury returned a multi-defendant, multi-count indictment charging Defendants Richard Cornelius, Eric Morgan, Lonnie Bennett, Brandon Payne, Bernard Wilcox, Tamichael Darden, Miller Sutton, Reginald Battle, Sr., Hafez Abdullahi, Danny Sims, and Corey Mitchell with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine and, in some cases, other drug-related crimes. Each of the Defendants have had their initial appearances and arraignments. Defendants Cornelius, Sutton, Sims, and Mitchell are detained pending trial, and Defendants Morgan, Bennett, Payne, Darden, Battle, Wilcox, and Abdullahi were released on bond.

Defendant Hafez Abdullahi entered his plea of guilty on June 16, 2022, and is awaiting sentencing.

On October 25, 2021, the Court declared this case complex. This case involves long-term electronic surveillance investigations resulting in a voluminous amount of discovery material constituting several terabytes of electronically stored evidence. And due to the number of recordings, photographs, and reports generated during the extensive investigation, the parties have need additional time to review discovery, prepare the case and engage in plea negotiations, if applicable. Moreover, this case was sealed on November 15, 2022, and the parties need additional time to adjust and prepare their cases once the developments are made known.

After careful consideration, the Court finds it serves the ends of justice to grant the parties adequate time to address these matters. The ends of justice served by granting a continuance outweigh the interests of Defendants and the public in a speedy trial. Failure to grant a continuance would deny counsel reasonable time for effective preparation and could result in a miscarriage of justice. Accordingly, the Court **GRANTS** the Joint Motion for Continuance [Doc. 309] and **HEREBY ORDERS** this case be continued until March 13, 2022, the term of Court for the Athens Division. The parties who received notice by by the Court are required to attend the scheduled **STATUS CONFERENCE on January 12, 2023**. The delay occasioned by this continuance shall be excludable pursuant to the provisions of the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161.

**SO ORDERED**, this 20th day of December, 2022.

S/ C. Ashley Royal  
C. ASHLEY ROYAL, SENIOR JUDGE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT