

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND

I, Lise B. George, depose and state as follows:

**INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND**

1. I make this Affidavit in support of an arrest warrant and criminal complaint for JESSICA ABREU (née Brown, also known as Shamarzera Yahu herein “ABREU”), year of birth 1991, charging ABREU with violating 18 U.S.C. § 1204 (international parental kidnapping).

2. I am a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), United States Department of Justice. I have authority to enforce the criminal laws of the United States and to make arrests. I am an “investigative or law enforcement officer” of the United States within the meaning of Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 41(a)(2)(C), that is, a government agent engaged in enforcing the criminal laws and duly authorized by the Attorney General to request search and arrest warrants.

3. I have been a Special Agent with the FBI since 2009. I am currently assigned to violent crime matters within the Providence Resident Agency. I investigate bank robbery, exploitation of children, as well as the trafficking of individuals within and from outside the United States. I have received extensive training in federal criminal and constitutional law and evidence collection. I am a graduate of Georgetown University, where I received my master’s degree from the School of Foreign Service for Latin American Studies. From 2009 to 2011, I was assigned to a white-collar crime squad where I investigated financial institution fraud, mortgage fraud, and securities fraud among other criminal violations. From 2011 to 2017, I was assigned to the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force. From 2017 to 2021, I was assigned to the Boston Field Office, where I investigated human trafficking and child exploitation matters. Prior to my appointment as a Special Agent, I was employed for three years as an Intelligence

Analyst with the FBI, during which time I conducted analysis, researched, and wrote reports in support of FBI white collar and cybercrime investigations. I have participated in investigations of human trafficking, bank fraud, narcotics trafficking and money laundering, and among other things, have conducted and participated in physical surveillance, debriefings of informants, and the execution of search warrants. I have also been an affiant of Title III wire intercepts.

4. The facts in this affidavit come from my involvement in a collaborative investigation being handled primarily by the FBI and Customs and Border Patrol (“CBP”), among others. This affidavit is intended to show there are specific and articulable facts for the requested arrest warrant and criminal complaint and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.

#### **Background**

5. ABREU was formerly married to an individual, V.A., and shares five children<sup>1</sup> under the age of 16<sup>2</sup> with V.A.

6. In December 2021, according to V.A., ABREU abruptly and without permission took the children to Alabama to an unknown location. At this time, ABREU was becoming more integrated with the Hebrew Israelites religious group. V.A. called an attorney, and ABREU returned to Rhode Island with the children soon thereafter.

7. On March 31, 2022, Honorable Associate Justice Patricia K. Asquith of the State of Rhode Island, Providence Sc. Family Court, presided over a nominal hearing for divorce of ABREU and V.A.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The full names of the children are known to your Affiant. It is provided herein as “the children” to comply with Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1.

<sup>2</sup> The eldest of the children has a birth year of 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The full name of the left-behind parent, in this case the father, is known to your Affiant. It is provided herein in redacted format to comply with Fed. R. Crim. P. 49.1.

8. Several months later, on May 25, 2022, V.A. received a text message from one of his minor children, who stated that she “will miss” him. V.A. later spoke with ABREU’s parents, who confirmed that ABREU had taken all of the children to Tanzania<sup>4</sup> without V.A.’s knowledge.

9. V.A. had a scheduled parental visit with the children on June 3, 2022. ABREU and the children did not appear for this visit.

10. On July 19, 2022, the Associate Justice Patricia K. Asquith held a hearing at which V.A. was present but ABREU failed to appear.

11. On August 19, 2022, Magistrate Paul Jones, Jr. of the Providence/Bristol Family Court signed a judgment that awarded joint legal custody of their minor children between ABREU and V.A.; that gave ABREU physical placement of the minor children; and that provided the State of Rhode Island as the “Home State” of the parties’ minor children.

12. On August 24, 2022, Magistrate Denise Cassisi Finkelman of Providence/Bristol County Family Court signed an Order finding that “Plaintiff (ABREU) is in violation of the UCCJEA, PKPA, and all applicable federal kidnapping statutes by taking the parties’ minor children to the country of Tanzania and refusing to return the children to Defendant (V.A.) in violation of this Court’s custody orders.” The order demanded that ABREU return to the State of Rhode Island with all of the parties’ minor children forthwith. The Order also stated that V.A. shall receive the parties’ minor children from ABREU immediately upon their return to the State of Rhode Island or anywhere within the United States. Further, Magistrate Finkelman awarded V.A. sole legal custody and physical placement of the children. Last, the order provided that any and all law

---

<sup>4</sup> Your affiant confirmed travel of ABREU and the children to Tanzania. They arrived on May 26, 2022.

enforcement agencies, the Department of Children Youth and Families and the like shall assist with transferring the children from ABREU's possession into V.A.'s possession.

13. During that general timeframe, V.A. had retained a private attorney, who contacted your Affiant. The attorney stated that ABREU had acknowledged the existence of Magistrate Finkelman's Order mandating that ABREU return her children to the United States. However, ABREU stated that she does not recognize any courts or custody decisions that were made by the courts since she is now a "sovereign citizen."

14. ABREU is believed to have remained overseas with the children for the past several years since the May 2022 trip to Tanzania. As a result, V.A.'s visits pursuant to the joint-custody agreement, and the sole custody order, have been obstructed.

15. In January 2024, during an FBI interview with V.A., V.A. described a video call he had with his children that was not monitored by ABREU. During this video call, ABREU stated that the children reported that their mother had a new boyfriend, they were left alone for days at a time, and that sometimes they were left alone without food. They also reported that on occasion, they were forced to walk around their city<sup>5</sup> to get food. V.A. stated that he did not believe the children were receiving adequate schooling despite the fact that ABREU posted videos and messages on a social media platform about purportedly home-schooling the children.

16. Your Affiant has learned that on Saturday, June 1, 2024, ABREU and the children are scheduled to board a flight landing in Los Angeles International Airport (from Doha, Qatar) at 17:05 on Qatar Airways flight 739.

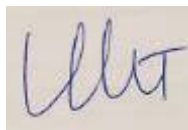
---

<sup>5</sup> Based on Internet Protocol addresses, which were captured via money transfers from V.A. to ABREU, ABREU and the children were residing in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

**Conclusion**

17. Based on the foregoing, I believe probable cause exists to arrest ABREU and charge her with international parental kidnapping in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1204. Accordingly, I respectfully ask that the Court authorize the issuance of an arrest warrant and criminal complaint for ABREU.

Respectfully submitted,



Lise B. George  
Special Agent  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed.

**Sworn telephonically and signed electronically**

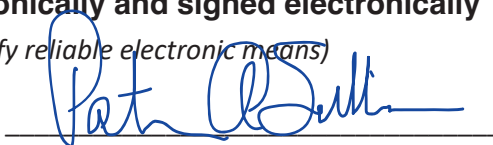
R. Crim. P. 4.1 by **Telephone**. (*specify reliable electronic means*)

May 31, 2024

*Date*

**Providence, Rhode Island**

*City and State*



*Judge's signature*

**Patricia A. Sullivan, USMJ**

*Patricia A. Sullivan, U.S. Magistrate Judge*