

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
for the
Southern District of Indiana

United States of America
v.

Case No.
1:21-mj-0874

James Lancaster,

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of 9/7/2021 - 9/10/2021 in the county of Marion in the
Southern District of Indiana, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section Offense Description
Counts 1 & 2: 18 U.S.C. § 1708 Theft of Mail

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See Attached Affidavit.

Continued on the attached sheet.

/s/ Brian Clancy

Complainant's signature

SA Brian Clancy, USPS-OIG

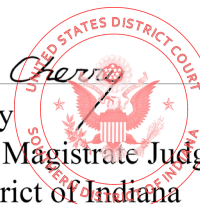
Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed.R.Crim.P. 4.1 by
telephone (reliable electronic means)

Date: 9/16/2021

City and state: Indianapolis, Indiana

Paul R. Cherry
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of Indiana



AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION

1. I, Brian Clancy, being duly sworn under oath, states as follows:

I. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

2. I am a Special Agent with the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General (USPS-OIG) and have been so employed since December 2020. I investigate criminal violations of state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, controlled substance offenses such as violations of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 844 and 841 and violations related to mail theft, bank fraud, wire fraud including but not limited to such violations of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1028A, 1707, 1708, 1709, 1343, 1344, and 1349.

3. Prior to USPS-OIG, your Affiant was employed as a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), a component of the United States Department of Justice. I was employed by ATF from 2015-2020. In connection with official ATF duties, I investigated criminal violations of federal laws, including firearms offenses such as violations of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g) and 924(c). I testified in judicial proceedings including trials. I was involved in various types of surveillance and in the debriefing of defendants, witnesses, informants, and others who have knowledge of the use of firearms in conjunction with other criminal activities, including distribution of controlled substances.

4. Prior to ATF, your Affiant was employed with the Joliet Police Department (JPD) in Joliet, Illinois for five months in 2015 as a patrol officer and was assigned to the Neighborhood Oriented Police Team. Prior to working with JPD, your Affiant was employed by the Department of Homeland Security as a Federal Agent within the Federal Air Marshal Service in New York, New York from 2009-2015.

5. I have received special training related to the enforcement of federal and state criminal laws from the following academies or classes. My initial training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) Artesia, New Mexico in 2009 for a Basic Federal Agent Training Program; Federal Air Marshal Training Program Atlantic City, New Jersey in 2010; Reid Interviewing and Interrogation Training New York, New York in 2013; University of Illinois Police Training Institute Academy Champaign, Illinois in 2015; Criminal Investigators Training Program at FLETC Brunswick, Georgia in 2016; ATF Special Agent Basic Training at ATF Academy Brunswick, Georgia in 2016; Firearm Nexus Training at Huntsville, Alabama in 2017.

II. PURPOSE OF THE AFFIDAVIT

6. This affidavit is submitted in support of the arrest of James LANCASTER (hereinafter LANCASTER) for violations of two counts of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1708 (theft of mail).

7. The information set forth in this affidavit is based upon my participation in this investigation, interviews of witnesses, review of law enforcement reports, discussions with other law enforcement officers involved in the investigation, and my training and experience. This affidavit does not set forth every fact your Affiant has learned during this investigation, but rather is provided solely for the purpose of establishing probable cause in support of the criminal complaint in this matter. The information contained in the following paragraphs is either personally known to your Affiant or was told to your Affiant by other law enforcement officers.

III. PROBABLE CAUSE

8. James LANCASTER was is a former Manager of Customer Service at the New Augusta Post Office located at 8401 Moller Road Indianapolis, Indiana. The New Augusta Post Office is located at 8401 Moller Road Indianapolis, Indiana, within the Southern District of Indiana.

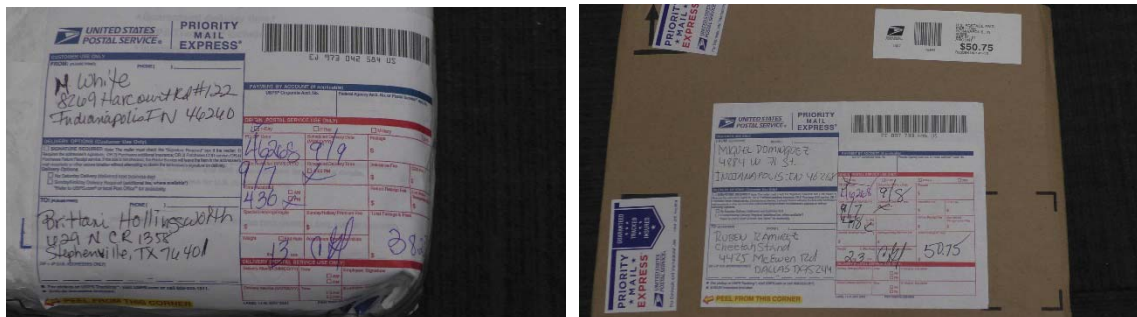
9. On June 23, 2021, when LANCASTER was still employed by the USPS, LANCASTER was interviewed by USPS-OIG Special Agents for alleged mail theft related to business checks. During that interview, LANCASTER admitted to stealing mail. LANCASTER was then placed on emergency leave by USPS management. LANCASTER resigned from his position of Manager of Customer Service at the New Augusta Post Office on June 25, 2021.

10. On August 13, 2021, USPS-OIG your Affiant was contacted by USPS Manager of Customer Service at the New Augusta Post Office, June Harrington. Harrington stated that two employees who wish to be kept anonymous saw LANCASTER enter the New Augusta Post Office employee-only restricted side of the building. The two employees told Harrington that LANCASTER has done this numerous times and it normally happened around 8:00 P.M.

A. Theft #1: September 7, 2021

11. On September 8, 2021, Harrington informed your Affiant that two (2) express parcels were accepted and scanned by New Augusta Post Office the day prior, September 7, 2021. On September 8, 2021, the parcels were found inside of a lobby collection box at Eagle Creek Post Office located at 6401 Gateway Drive Indianapolis, Indiana, 46254. Harrington provided your Affiant the tracking number for both parcels: EI00 7733 646U S and EJ97 3042 584U S. Finding mail that was accepted and scanned in one postal facility in a different facility's lobby collection box is very unusual.

12. The Manager of Customer Service at Eagle Creek Post Office, Michelle Haselwood, informed your Affiant that the express parcels were located approximately between 9:00 and 10:00 am in the lobby collection box on September 8, 2021. Haselwood stated that she believes both parcels were opened and resealed because the tape and express stickers appeared to be cut or broken.



13. On September 9, 2021, your Affiant met Haselwood at Eagle Creek Post Office. Your Affiant took photographs of the two parcels in question. Based on my training and experience, the parcels appeared to be tampered with.

14. Your Affiant reviewed surveillance footage at Eagle Creek Post Office from activity on the night of September 7, 2021. That footage revealed who your Affiant believes to be LANCASTER entering the lobby of Eagle Creek Post Office carrying two parcels. The parcels appear to be the same shape and color of the parcels which were recovered in the collection box and were stolen from the mail stream. Video shows a reflection of LANCASTER at the collection box where the parcels were later recovered. Video shows LANCASTER leaving the lobby empty handed.



15. Your Affiant attempted to contact the original senders of these two parcels recovered, using the return address information. Your Affiant was able to contact a Michael White who was the sender of express parcel EJ97 3042 584U S. Your Affiant read White a USPS-OIG Consent to Search Form asking for consent to search the tampered parcel. White agreed and told your Affiant the parcel contained baby bottles he was sending to the mother of his child in Texas. Your Affiant search the parcel and it contained the exact items White said it would with no additional items. White asked your Affiant to release the parcel to him as he said it would no longer arrive in time. Your Affiant had White sign a PS Form 6700 to release the item back to the rightful owner.

16. Your Affiant reviewed surveillance footage of cameras at New Augusta Post Office. That footage revealed what your Affiant believes to be a Dodge Durango entering the employee only parking lot at approximately 8:26 PM on the night of September 7, 2021.

17. BMV queries reveal LANCASTER owes a 2012 Dodge Durango bearing Indiana license plate VJ6287 and VIN 1C4SDJET5CC308869. Your Affiant has seen LANCASTER drive the Durango to New Augusta Post Office when he was employed by USPS.

18. Your Affiant believes LANCASTER opened the two parcels looking for items of value (i.e. money orders and/or US Currency) and saw there was nothing of value so he returned the parcels to Post Office in order to not create any stolen parcels reports. Your Affiant knows through his training and experience that postal employees often become efficient in profiling parcels they believe could contain money, contraband, and or currency. Persons who commit thefts of parcels containing these items know generally a complaint will not be filed or reported since the sender or receiver will not want to inform law enforcement of what was inside the parcels.

B. Theft #2: September 10, 2021

19. Your Affiant reviewed surveillance footage of cameras at New Augusta Post Office and confirmed LANCASTER presence on September 10, 2021. On that date, LANCASTER arrived in his Dodge Durango and parked near the north dock door. LANCASTER exited his vehicle and approached the dock doors while putting on a COVID-19 medical mask.

20. LANCASTER appeared to look through the clear plexiglass windows in the dock doors to see if anyone was present in the area. LANCASTER opened the rear door of the Post Office and entered in the dock breezeway gaining access to the restricted area of the Post Office. LANCASTER looked through the plexiglass windows of the second set of dock doors in what appeared to be an attempt to stay hidden. LANCASTER entered the final set of doors and clearly

entered the restricted area where mail could be found. LANCASTER then exited the Post Office carrying what appeared to be a white USPS box.

21. LANCASTER walked off the video for only seconds towards his vehicle and returned to view of the camera without a box then walked back into the Post Office again.

22. Minutes later, LANCASTER can be seen coming from his vehicle with a white box in hand and walked back into the Post Office.

23. LANCASTER returned to his vehicle approximately five minutes later without the white box, entered his vehicle, and left the Post Office. In total, LANCASTER walked back and forth from his vehicle to the Post Office dock doors three times.

24. During this time, your Affiant believes LANCASTER was open carrying a firearm on his right hip. LANCASTER informed your Affiant in a prior interview that he carries a firearm and has a permit. Your Affiant has seen LANCASTER open carrying a firearm on his right hip during prior surveillance operations.

25. Your Affiant believes LANCASTER opened the white parcel box looking for items of value (i.e. money orders and/or US Currency) and saw there was nothing of value so he returned the parcels to Post Office in order to not create any stolen parcels reports. Your Affiant knows through his training and experience that postal employees often become efficient in profiling parcels they believe could contain money, contraband, and or currency. Persons who commit thefts of parcels containing these items know generally a complaint will not be filed or reported since the sender or receiver will not want to inform law enforcement of what was inside the parcels.

IV. CONCLUSION

26. Based upon the above, there is probable cause to believe James LANCASTER committed two counts of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1708 (theft of mail).

/s/ Brian Clancy
Brian Clancy, Special Agent
United States Postal Service
Office of Inspector General

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1 by telephone.

Date: 9/16/2021

Paul R. Cherry
Paul R. Cherry
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of Indiana

