UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
GALVESTON DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	§	
	§	
vs.	§	
	§	**Magistrate No. 3:26-mj-40**
JASON LEON WATFORD	§	
	§	

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Thomas Plew, being duly sworn, deposes and states the following:

I am a Task Force Officer of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). I have been a Task Force Officer of the FBI since April of 2026. I am charged with the duty of investigating violations of the laws of the United States, collecting evidence in cases in which the United States is or may be a party in interest, and performing other duties imposed by law. I am currently assigned to the Texas City Resident Agency and frequently investigate crimes involving federal violations of federal laws in the Special Maritime Jurisdiction of the United States.

The information enumerated in the paragraphs below, furnished in support of this Affidavit, is derived from my own observations, and that of other law enforcement officers.

On Sunday, November 8th, 2026, at approximately 2300 hours, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) Investigator Luigi Mondini (Mondini) contacted personnel with the FBI Texas City Resident Agency to report a suspected homicide onboard the MSC Seascape Cruise Ship believed to have occurred on November 8th, 2026, at approximately 2124 hours while the ship was in international waters at approximate coordinates of Latitude: 28° 43' 30" N, Longitude: 93° 42' 74". W. Mondini advised that a female passenger was found deceased in her cruise ship room with multiple facial injuries. Luigi advised that Jason Leon Watford had been detained by ship security due to being a suspect in the incident.

On Monday, November 9th, 2026, at approximately 0530 hours, the MSC Seascape returned to Port of Galveston Pier 16 located at 1602 Harborside Dr, Galveston, Galveston County, TX 77550. FBI personnel boarded the vessel to conduct an investigation.

FBI Personnel reviewed security camera footage of the outside of the subject room prior to, during, and after the alleged incident. It was observed that the male suspect identified by ship security as Jason Leon Watford ["Subject"] entered the room at approximately 1946 hours on November 8th, 2026. It was observed that Victim 1 entered the room at approximately 2011 hours on November 8th, 2026. No other individuals were observed entering or exiting the subject room. At approximately 2102 hours, MSC housekeeper A.D. knocked on the door of the room to provide towels. It was observed that Subject opened the door and briefly spoke to A.D. At approximately 2113 hours, MSC employees Dri Utami, Anu Varghese, and Joaquim Cunha arrived to the room due to housekeeper A.D. calling them after observing what she believed to be blood on Subject's hands and pants as well as motionless female lying face down on the floor.

At approximately 2115 hours, Subject was observed exiting the subject room wearing a different shirt and pants than when he had previously answered the door for housekeeper A.D. After leaving the room, Subject was observed sitting on the hallway floor outside the room scrolling on his smart phone.

Security camera footage further showed the MSC employees calling ship security due to observing a motionless female lying face down on the floor.

Following review of the security camera footage, FBI personnel conducted an interview with Subject. He was advised of his Miranda rights, waived those rights, and agreed to participate in a post-Miranda interview, which was audio and video recorded.

Subject stated that he and Victim 1 boarded the MSC Seascape on November 8th, 2026. Subject advised that on the evening of November 8th, 2026, he and Victim 1 had been arguing while eating at a restaurant onboard the vessel.

Subject stated that, following their disagreement at the restaurant, he returned to their room, and Victim 1 returned to the room shortly thereafter. Subject stated that Victim 1 and he continued to engage in an escalating verbal dispute that caused him to "snap," and he struck Victim 1 multiple times causing blood to emit from her mouth and onto his shirt, pants, and hands. FBI personnel located Subject's blood-stained clothing on the floor of the room.

Subject further advised that, at some point during the altercation, he began to choke Victim 1 with both hands. Subject stated that he also wrapped his right arm around Victim 1's neck from behind while she was lying down. Subject stated that he applied pressure to Victim 1's neck for approximately four to five minutes and released his hold only after becoming exhausted. Subject stated that, after releasing his grip, Victim 1 lay motionless on the floor for approximately 10 minutes before MSC Housekeeper A.D. knocked on his door. Subject did not contact ship security or medical personnel despite Victim 1 lying motionless on the floor.

Based on my review of CCTV footage, the post-Miranda statements made by Subject, corroborating statements provided by MSC personnel, and the inspection of the body of Victim 1 by FBI personnel, I submit there is probable cause to believe that Subject committed Murder, in

violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1111.

Thomas Plew, Task Force Officer
Federal Bureau of Investigation

SWORN TO and SUBSCRIBED via telephone this 9th day of November, 2026 and I find probable cause.

HON. ANDREW EDISON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE