

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TAMPA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

Case No. 8:22-cr-00286-TPB-SPF

REINALDO EULICE LAFFITA LEON

ORDER

On April 24, 2023, the Court found there to be reasonable grounds to believe Defendant Reinaldo Eulice Laffita Leon may presently suffer from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to proceed to trial (Doc. 28). Consequently, the Court appointed Valerie McClain, Psy.D., to conduct an independent psychological examination of Defendant. Following the psychological examination on May 8, 2023, Dr. McClain filed her Forensic Psychological Evaluation (Doc. S-33). Dr. McClain concluded that Defendant is not competent to proceed to trial based on her findings that Defendant had an unacceptable : (1) appreciation of the charges; (2) appreciation of the range and nature of possible penalties; (3) understanding of the adversarial nature of the legal process; and (4) capacity to testify relevantly.

Thereafter, the Court conducted a hearing on June 14, 2023, to determine Defendant's mental competency. 18 U.S.C. §§ 4241(c) and 4247(d). At the hearing, Defendant was specifically advised of his right to testify at the hearing. The government moved for the admission of the Forensic Psychological Evaluation into evidence without objection. Defendant testified on his behalf. No other evidence or

testimony was offered by either party. Based on the Court's independent review of the Forensic Psychological Evaluation, Defendant's testimony, and the Court's own observations at the hearing, the Court found by a preponderance of the evidence that Defendant was presently suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense. 18 U.S.C. § 4241(d). Consequently, the Court ordered Defendant committed to the custody of the Attorney General to be hospitalized for treatment in a suitable facility for a reasonable period of time, not to exceed four months, as is necessary to determine whether there is a substantial probability that in the foreseeable future, he would attain the capacity to permit the proceedings to go forward.

At the conclusion of that hospitalization, the facility's warden filed a Certificate of Competency (Doc. S-65). The warden also filed a detailed Forensic Evaluation report submitted by Katlyn Hudson, Psy.D. ("Hudson Report") (*Id.*). Dr. Hudson opined that Defendant "is presently competent to proceed." (*Id.*).

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 4241(e) and 4247(d), the Court conducted a subsequent competency hearing on November 20, 2024. At the hearing, the United States moved the Hudson Report into evidence without objection. The parties stipulated to the finding in the report. In addition, the Court asked Defendant questions to assess his competency.

Based on the Hudson Report, the Court's own observations, and in the

absence of any contrary evidence, the Court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that Defendant has recovered to such an extent that he is not presently suffering from a mental disease or defect that renders him unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to properly assist in his defense. Accordingly, the Court finds that Defendant Reinaldo Eulice Laffita Leon is competent to stand trial and participate in pre-trial proceedings.

ORDERED in Tampa, Florida on November 20, 2024.


SEAN P. FLYNN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE