UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

JAMES, Phillip Michael Thomas,
a.k.a. SIAGHA-COKE, Felibi Biladi,

Petitioner,

v.

ENGLISH, Brian,
Warden, Miami Correctional Facility, in his official capacity;

MULLIN, Markwayne,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in his official capacity;

BLANCHE, Todd,
Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, in his official capacity;

Respondents.

Case No. 26-cv-1225

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

INTRODUCTION

1. This habeas petition challenges the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's ("DHS") unlawful detention of a U.S. citizen.

2. Petitioner Phillip Michael Thomas James, a.k.a. Felibi Biladi Kambil Siagha-Coke, is a natural-born U.S. citizen[1] who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and Delusional Disorder. He was born to Carol Jane Baker and Byron James in 1987, in Orange County, Florida.

[1] As set forth in more detail below, Mr. James has gone by several other aliases, including Felipe Bella De Campbell Coke, Felipe Siagha De Campbell, Ahmed Ibn Syagha-Kuk, and variations on these names.

3. DHS claims that Mr. James is not a U.S. citizen. It initiated removal proceedings against Mr. James on December 1, 2025, alleging that he is a native of Jamaica and a citizen of Lebanon. DHS took Mr. James into civil immigration custody on January 5, 2026, after he appeared at an immigration court hearing. The agency presently holds Mr. James at the Miami Correctional Facility ("Miami CF") in Bunker Hill, Indiana.

4. Mr. James respectfully requests this Court issue a writ of habeas corpus instructing Respondents to release him from immigration custody. DHS's detention of Mr. James violates the Non-Detention Act, 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a), which prohibits the government from detaining any U.S. "citizen . . . except pursuant to an Act of Congress." The agency's detention of Mr. James also violates the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"), which only permits DHS's detention of noncitizens. *See, e.g.*, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225, 1226, 1231.

PARTIES

5. Petitioner Phillip Michael Thomas James, a.k.a. Felibi Biladi Kambil Siagha-Coke, was born in Florida in 1987 and is a U.S. citizen by birth. DHS alleges that Mr. James is not a U.S. citizen but is instead a native of Jamaica and citizen of Lebanon. It presently detains Mr. James at the Miami CF.

6. Respondent Brian English, the Warden of the Miami CF, is sued in his official capacity. He is Mr. James's immediate custodian. *See Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 435 (2004) ("[I]n habeas challenges to present physical confinement—'core challenges'—the default rule is that the proper respondent is the warden of the facility where the [detainee] is being held.").

7. Respondent Markwayne Mullin is sued in his official capacity as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. DHS is responsible for administering and enforcing the immigration laws, including initiating removal proceedings and detaining those that fall within

the purview of DHS's detention authority. Secretary Mullin has ultimate legal custodianship over Mr. James.

8. Respondent Todd Blanche is sued in his official capacity as the Attorney General of the United States. Attorney General Blanche oversees the U.S. Department of Justice, including the Executive Office of Immigration Review ("EOIR"). EOIR adjudicates individual immigration matters, including removal and custody proceedings.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

9. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to Art. I § 9, cl. 2 of the United States Constitution (Suspension Clause), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), 28 U.S.C. § 1361 (mandamus), and 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (federal habeas corpus).

10. This Court may grant equitable relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 *et seq.* and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651; and the mandamus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 1361. It may further grant injunctive relief under the Administrative Procedures Act, 5 U.S.C. § 706; and declaratory relief under the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*

11. Venue is proper in this District and before this Division because Petitioner is detained at the Miami CF, which is in Bunker Hill, Indiana. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1391; *Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. at 442.

28 U.S.C. § 2243'S REQUIREMENTS

12. Title 28 U.S.C. § 2243 requires a "court . . . or judge entertaining an application for a writ of habeas corpus" to "forthwith award the writ or issue an order directing the respondent[s] to show cause why the writ should not be granted." The writ or order to show cause "shall be directed to the person having custody of the person detained." 28 U.S.C. § 2243.

13. Respondents must return the writ or order to show cause "within three days unless" they show "good cause [for] additional time." *Id.* Respondents' return may not "exceed[] twenty days." *Id.*

STATEMENT OF FACTS

14. Petitioner Phillip Michael Thomas James, a.k.a. Felibi Biladi Kambil Siagha-Coke, was born in Orange County, Florida, in 1987, to Carol Jane Baker—later Carol Jane Baker Wynn ("Ms. Wynn")—and Byron James. *See* Ex. A, Cert. of Birth. He is a U.S. citizen by birth. Ms. Wynn is a U.S. citizen by birth. The late Mr. Byron James was a Jamaican national.

15. Ms. Wynn raised Mr. James "throughout most of his early childhood." Ex. B, Decl. of Carol Baker Wynn ¶ 6. Mr. James began to exhibit behavioral issues when he entered kindergarten. *Id.* ¶ 7. By the time he entered elementary school, Mr. James's "behavior became increasingly difficult to manage." *Id.* Medical professionals eventually diagnosed Mr. James with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ("ADHD") and Oppositional Defiant Disorder ("ODD"). *Id.* ¶ 8. Ms. Wynn brought Mr. James to a children's clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, for treatment after Mr. James was diagnosed. *Id.*

16. As Mr. James "grew older, his behavioral difficulties became more serious." *Id.* ¶ 10. Ms. Wynn experienced notable challenges during this period. *See id.* She felt like she "could not work because [she] always had to be available." *Id.* One time, Mr. James ran away and Ms. Wynn had to file a missing person's report. *Id.* Because Mr. James's "behavior had become very difficult for [Ms. Wynn] to manage," Mr. James went to live with his father when he was around seven or eight years old. *Id.* ¶ 11. Ms. Wynn remained involved in Mr. James's life. *Id.* Mr. James found stability for some time after this move. *See id.* ¶¶ 11–13.

17. Things changed for Mr. James after he "travelled to Jamaica as an adult." *Id.* ¶ 14.

He visited his father's family while there. *Id.* ¶ 15. Mr. James communicated to Ms. Wynn that he drank something during that trip and afterwards became nauseous and began experiencing hallucinations. *Id.*

18. When Mr. James returned from Jamaica, he "became increasingly aggressive" and repeatedly told Ms. Wynn she was not his mother. *Id.* ¶ 16. Mr. James expressed this to Ms. Wynn "everyday." *Id.* Ms. Wynn found the comments "deeply upsetting,' *id.*, and felt as though Mr. James "had been brainwashed," *id.* ¶ 17. Ms. Wynn gradually distanced herself from her son because of his growing aggression. *See id.* ¶¶ 17–18. She felt like she "had to distance [her]self from [Mr. James] for [her] own well-being." *Id.* ¶ 18. Ms. Wynn then lost "regular contact" with Mr. James. *Id.* Ms. Wynn supported Mr. James financially every so often but did not "know much about what happened to [Mr. James]" for many years. *Id.* ¶ 19.

19. In the years when Mr. James was not in close contact with his mother, he used various aliases and had multiple interactions with immigration officials within both the U.S. Department of State ("DOS") and DHS.

20. Mr. James filed for a U.S. passport on September 25, 2008, under the name, "Phillip M. James." Ex. C, Letter from Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Dep't of State, to Felipe B. D. C. Coke (Jan. 24, 2025), at 1. He submitted his Florida birth certificate with that application, and DOS issued him a passport under passport number [redacted] *See id.*

21. Mr. James then applied for another U.S. passport on September 14, 2023. *See id.* He submitted his first passport and a New York court order showing a name change to Felipe Bella De Campbell Coke. *Id.* at 1. DOS approved the application and issued Mr. James passports under passport numbers [redacted] and [redacted] *Id.* at 2.

22. On January 24, 2025, DOS issued Mr. James a revocation notice of his passports.

Records, May 2011; Ex. G, Duval County, Florida Court Records, October 2021. However, despite DHS's apparent knowledge based on the I-213's listed criminal cases that "Felibi Siagha-Coke" was the same person as Mr. James, nowhere did the I-213 list any of his other names or aliases.

26. While in custody, Mr. James has filed three habeas petitions pro se challenging his detention under the name Felibi Siagha-Coke, beginning in February 2026. *See Siagha-Coke v. English*, 3:26cv200 (DRL) (SJF); *Siagha-Coke v. English et al.*, 3:26cv503 (DRL) (SJF); *Siagha-Coke v. DHS et al.*, 3:26cv706 (DRL) (SJF). In those petitions, Mr. James held himself out as a Jamaican citizen, consistent with his sincere but delusional beliefs about his identity. As for the first petition—assuming Mr. James to be a Jamaican citizen as both he and DHS had represented—Judge Leichty held that Mr. James was detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than subject to mandatory detention, and was entitled to a bond hearing. Judge Leichty dismissed the two subsequent habeas petitions as duplicative and jurisdictionally barred, respectively.

27. Mr. James's immigration attorneys investigated his case as part of their representation for him before EOIR. They reached out to the Jamaican Passport, Immigration, and Citizenship Agency ("PICA"). A representative from PICA checked their records and found that "**no** Jamaican Citizenship records exist[ed]" for "Phillip Michael Thomas James / Felibi Biladi Kambil Siagha Coke / Siagha Coke" under Mr. James's date of birth. *See* Ex. H, Emails between Philbert Smith, Legal Off., Passport, Immigr. & Citizenship Agency, Jamaica, and Whitney Viets & Gabrielle Camilleri, Attorneys, The Bronx Defenders.

28. Mr. James's attorneys also arranged for Mr. James to receive both a Competency Evaluation Report and a Confidential Forensic Psychological Report. *See* Ex. I, Lucia Lezama Tannenbaum, Ph.D., Competency Evaluation Report ("Lezama Tannenbaum Rep."); Ex. J, Dana Brauman, Psy. D., MSCP, Confidential Forensic Psychological Report ("Brauman Rep."). Dr.

Lezama Tannenbaum diagnosed Mr. James with continuous schizophrenia. Ex. I, Lezama Tannenbaum Rep. at 4. She noted that Mr. James "displayed grandiose and paranoid delusions." *Id.* at 5. Dr. Lezama Tannenbaum also found that Mr. James's "speech was disorganized, and he presented with reduced emotional expression and incongruent effect." *Id.*

29. Dr. Brauman provided similar observations, diagnosing Mr. James with Delusional Disorder. *See* Ex. J, Brauman Rep. at 10. She reached that diagnosis after exploring Mr. James's immigration history with him. *See id.* at 12–13. During the evaluation, Mr. James claimed citizenship "in multiple nations, including Jamaica, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, and the United States." *Id.* Dr. Brauman determined that Mr. James "was not considered a reliable historian due to the serious nature of his mental illness, including a deeply entrenched delusional belief system." *Id.* at 3 n.1. Mr. James "gave varying accounts of his father's history," suggesting at various points that his father was "Jamaica politician Edward Seaga," that "his father was born in Lebanon in 1930 to a royal family," and that his father "was born in Boston and married a Panamanian woman." *Id.* at 3. Dr. Brauman expressed that she could not find any "evidence . . . to substantiate [Mr. James's] claims" within "the scope of publicly available internet sources." *Id.*

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

Violation of the Non-Detention Act, 18 U.S.C. § 4001

30. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference the above paragraphs.

31. Mr. James was born in Orange County, Florida. *See* Ex. A, Cert. of Birth. He is a U.S. citizen by birth. U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1; *Trump v. Barbara*, 609 U.S. ---, 2026 WL 1870543, at *15 (June 30, 2026) ("The Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment extended th[e]

promise [of citizenship] to every free-born person in this land.") (internal citation and quotation marks omitted).

32. The Non-Detention Act, 18 U.S.C. § 4001(a), prohibits the government from "imprison[ing]" or "otherwise detain[ing]" a U.S. citizen "except pursuant to an Act of Congress." Respondents do not possess any valid authorities to hold Mr. James, a U.S. citizen, in civil immigration detention. Respondents' ongoing detention of Mr. James violates the Non-Detention Act.

COUNT II

Violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1001 *et seq.*

33. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference the above paragraphs.

34. Congress has authorized DHS to detain "aliens" through various provision of the INA. *See, e.g.*, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225, 1226, 1231. Congress has not, however, authorized DHS to detain a U.S. citizen in civil immigration detention. DHS indeed has no jurisdiction to "order deportation" or detain someone who is not a noncitizen. *Ng Fung Ho v. White*, 259 U.S. 276, 284 (1922); *see also id.* ("[A] claim of [U.S.] citizenship is thus a denial of an essential jurisdictional fact.").

35. Mr. James is a U.S. citizen. Respondents' ongoing detention of him violates the INA.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court:

a) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;

b) Issue an order administratively staying Respondents from transferring Petitioner outside of this Court's geographic jurisdiction pending the Court's adjudication of this petition;

c) Declare that Petitioner's continued detention violates the Non-Detention Act and the Immigration and Nationality Act;

d) Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus and order Petitioner's immediate release from custody;

e) Award Petitioner his costs and reasonable attorney fees in this action as provided for by the Equal Access to Justice Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. § 504 and 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other basis justified under law; and

f) Grant such further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Edith Sangüeza

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* *Application for Admission Forthcoming*

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Bronx, NY