

Two Female Brazilian Nationals Charged with Illegal Re-Entry from BVI to St. Thomas

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ST. THOMAS — Valdete Pereira Santana and Joice Costa De Souza, both citizens of Brazil, were charged with entering the United States after having been deported and removed, the U.S. Attorney's Office has announced.

Both Pereira Santana and Costa De Souza made their initial appearance before the United States Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller on Wednesday.

According to court documents, on March 12, 2020, a Border Patrol Agents received information from Customs and Border Protection Officers that a group of four Brazilians did not report to their Cruise Ship in Tortola, British Virgin Islands and that that they would be might be traveling on board the ferry from St. John to St. Thomas. The information included photo description of the

suspects.

Border Patrol Agents with the assistance of Enforcement Removal Officers and Customs and Border Protection officers arrived on scene and the passengers began disembarking in St. Thomas. The border patrol agent conducted a consensual conversation with both females who admitted to the border patrol agent that they were from Brazil, illegally present in the United States without proper documentation to enter or remain in the United States legally.

Both Pereira Santana and Costa De Souza were arrested and transported to the offices of Customs and Border Protection and subsequently transported to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Offices for investigation and processing.

According to court documents, Pereira has a prior immigration history. On November 12, 2004, Border Patrol Agents in Falfurrias, Texas apprehended her. On January 13, 2005, an Immigration Judge issued an Order for her removal in absentia.

Court documents also revealed that Costa De Souza has a prior immigration and criminal history. On June 7, 2019, Border Patrol Agents in El Paso, Texas apprehended her. On July 8, 2019 Costa De Souza pleaded guilty in federal court to illegal entry and was sentenced to ten (10) days of imprisonment. On November 22, 2019, Costa De Souza was physically removed from the United States.

This case is being investigated by the U. S. Customs and Border Patrol, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Juan A. Albino.

United States Attorney Shappert reminds the public that a complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty.