

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Charges Against Cherise King Dismissed in Sexual Abuse Case

Allegations against paraprofessional teacher dropped without prejudice

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Cherise King

ST. CROIX In a recent development in the case against Cherise King, a 39-year-old paraprofessional teacher at St. Croix Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC), the United States Attorney's Office has moved to dismiss the charges.

United States Attorney Delia L. Smith, along with Assistant United States Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry, filed a motion in the District Court to dismiss without prejudice

both the original indictment and the superseding indictment against King.

This motion comes after the [initial charges](#) in April that King engaged in sexual acts with a male juvenile detainee, over the age of 12 but under the age of 16, at the YRC. The charges, if convicted, carried a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. The indictment had placed King in a position of significant responsibility, as her role at the center involved a trust and authority relationship with the minors in her care.

The dismissal, as stated in the motion, is considered to be in the interest of justice. The government counsel has confirmed that the defendant's counsel has no objections to this dismissal without prejudice. Consequently, the Court has granted the motion to dismiss the charges without prejudice.

The case had been part of a broader investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations and the Virgin Islands Police Department, under the umbrella of Project Safe Childhood. This nationwide initiative, launched by the Department of Justice in May 2006, focuses on combating child sexual exploitation and abuse.

While the reasons for the dismissal have not been detailed in the motion, United States Attorney Delia L. Smith reiterates the principle that an indictment is merely an allegation and that all defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood and its efforts to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse, the public can visit <http://www.justice.gov/psc>.