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St. Croix Ramp Agent Sentenced to Four Years for Cocaine Smuggling Through Airport

St. Croix ramp worker faces prison, fine, and community service

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The Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced on Monday the sentencing of Charles Rawlins, III, a 39-year-old resident of St. Croix. The sentencing, carried out by District Court Judge Wilma A. Lewis, orders Rawlins to serve 48 months in prison.

Following his incarceration, Rawlins will undergo three years of supervised release and must complete 100 hours of community service. Additionally, he faces a \$2,000 fine and a \$200 special assessment.

Rawlins' sentencing comes after his guilty plea to charges of conspiracy to possess with Intent to distribute a controlled substance and possession with Intent to distribute a controlled substance. His co-defendant, Wayne Jeffers, is scheduled for sentencing by Judge Lewis on December 15, 2023.

The case, rooted in a May 2022 incident, involved Jeffers, a 52-year-old Virgin Islands Port Authority Officer stationed at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport. According to court documents, in the early morning hours of May 11, Jeffers placed a suitcase containing 12 bricks of cocaine in a ladder truck on the airport ramp. Later that morning, Rawlins, employed as an airport ramp worker, transferred the suitcase from the truck to a baggage cart, intended for loading onto a Seaborne Silver aircraft bound for San Juan, PR. The suitcase, laden with cocaine, was subsequently seized by Customs and Border Protection Officers.

The substance in the suitcase was confirmed as cocaine by the Drug Enforcement Administration's Southeast Laboratory in Miami, FL, weighing in at 12.01 kilograms.

This case was investigated by a collaborative effort from Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Assistant United States Attorney Daniel H. Huston led the prosecution.

The case is part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation, an initiative that aims to dismantle high-level criminal organizations threatening the United States through a strategic, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Further information about the OCDETF Program is available on their official website.