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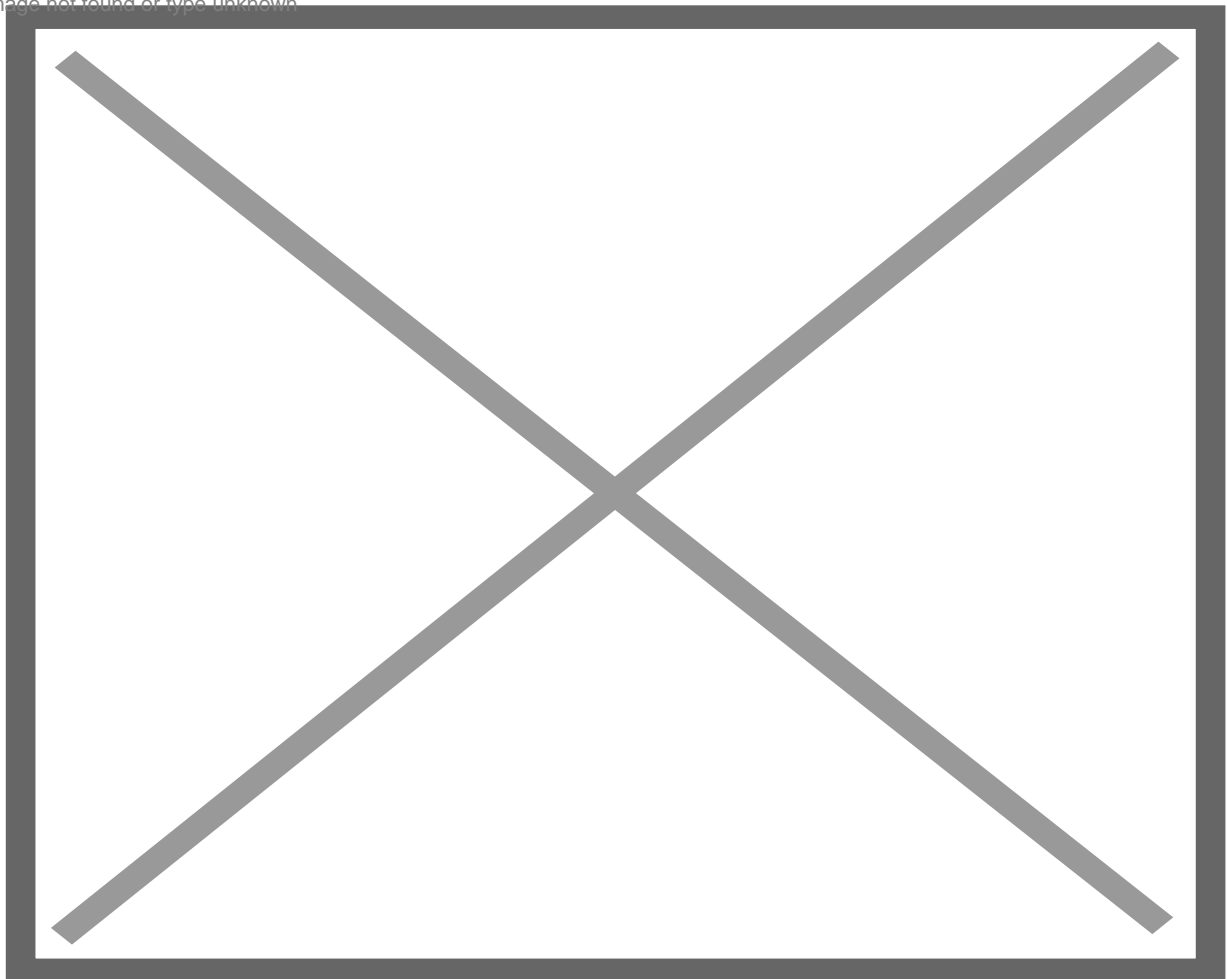
2,169.5 Kilos of Cocaine Seized in St. Croix Drug Bust, Four Arrested

Suspects detained after ditching cocaine bales during pursuit

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A boat is captured in the early morning hours of Feb. 12 on the shores of St. Croix's southwest coast. The scene, lit by spotlights, marks the end of a chase that resulted in the seizure of 2169.5 kilograms of narcotics.

Monday's report of a [major drug bust](#) on St. Croix's southwest coast has resulted in federal cocaine trafficking charges being laid against four Venezuelan nationals.

Daniel Marval-Navarro, Diesel Carreno-Carreno, Felix Jose-Bermudez and Luis Lugo-Marval have all been charged with conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute, and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, after they were captured in the Long Point area.

Documents filed in the District Court of the Virgin Islands on Tuesday indicate that the vessel the four men were on was spotted Sunday night around 11:10 p.m., as Customs and Border Protection agents were conducting aerial surveillance in the waters of St. Croix's south coast.

Located about 67 nautical miles south of St. Croix, the vessel was heading northwards at about 15 knots. The CBP crew sought assistance from a ship belonging to the British Royal Navy, which was located about 12 miles away from the target vessel. The naval ship launched two small boats in an attempt to intercept the suspicious vessel, but the target began to flee.

With the British boats in hot pursuit, the target vessel began speeding towards the beach at long point, while those on board started dumping their cargo. Approximately 29 bales were tossed overboard as the target vessel attempted to evade authorities, however CBP's aerial surveillance was able to keep track of the boat's movements.

Just before 3:00 a.m. Monday, the vessel arrived at Long Point, and CBP reportedly saw four individuals jumping off the boat. They headed towards a field next to a housing complex, and promptly disappeared into the bushes. With aerial surveillance still keeping tabs on the movement of the suspects, the V.I. Police Department, special agents from Homeland Security Investigations and the Drug Enforcement Administration were able to keep track of their movements. About an hour after they came ashore, the four men were apprehended, still in clothing that was dripping wet.

Once the four individuals had been detained, other VIPD, Homeland Security Investigations and Drug Enforcement Administration special agents took custody of the vessel, which still had 74 bales of contraband aboard, which was tested for cocaine with positive results. The total weight of the seized narcotics was 2169.5 kilograms.

Federal officials stressed the importance of the VIPD in successfully executing this complex and dangerous operations.

The case is currently before United States Magistrate Emile Henderson III.