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## Florida Woman Arrested for Cocaine Hidden in Shipment from St. Thomas

**Jaya Eugene faces charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine discovered by Customs officers inside a mattress she shipped to Miami**

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Janeke Simon **May 21, 2024**

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ST. THOMAS — U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers on December 15 seized nearly 16 kilograms of cocaine concealed inside a mattress in a shipment bound for Miami from St. Thomas, leading to the arrest of Jaya Eugene upon her arrival in Fort Lauderdale on January 2, 2023.

The mattress and the drugs were in a crate of other items, and the crate was addressed to Eugene.

According to court documents, on January 2, 2023, Eugene flew from Charlotte Amalie to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on a Spirit Airlines flight. Homeland Security Investigations met Ms. Eugene

as she landed, and escorted her to a secure area for questioning.

She reportedly told the HSI agents that she had shipped some bedroom furniture from St. Thomas to Miami, and that she had flown to St. Thomas from St. Croix to sign the documents with the shipping company. She thought the shipment would have contained between 30 to 80 pounds of marijuana.

Eugene said that she was supposed to have contacted someone who would then provide instructions on how to reach the next person in the delivery chain. She would then have rented a truck to transport the furniture shipment the following day.

For her part in the scheme, Eugene told HSI officials that she was paid approximately \$1500. She collected the money at the airport the day before she flew in to Fort Lauderdale, she said. Following her conversation with the HSI officers, Ms. Eugene was arrested and charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine.

On April 19, she appeared before District Court Magistrate Ruth Miller, who set a \$5000 unsecured bond for Mr. Eugene's release ahead of trial. Ms. Eugene is further instructed to remain in the territory unless the court grants permission for her to return to her Tallahassee, Florida residence. Additionally, she must surrender her passport and is prohibited from obtaining new travel documents while the case is pending.