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Woman Arrested at St. Thomas Airport for Cocaine Hidden in Frozen Shrimp

TSA X-ray screening reveals concealed cocaine bricks inside frozen shrimp bags; woman detained by Customs and Border Protection agents

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Similar to the June attempt at Cyril E. King Airport, a man in January tried to smuggle these cocaine bricks into JFK International Airport in New York.

ST. THOMAS — A woman is facing federal drug trafficking charges after bags of frozen shrimp in her luggage were allegedly found to be concealing bricks of cocaine.

Selena Cabrera Ortiz and her travel partner were at the Cyril E. King airport on June 23, and underwent the usual Transportation Security Administration screening of departing passengers

ahead of their American Airlines flight to John F. Kennedy airport in New York. Ortiz sent her blue suitcase through the x-ray machine, and the TSA employee operating the machine noticed what appeared to be a rectangular object inside a large frozen mass.

?Pulling the suitcase for a physical examination, officials discovered two freezer bags inside the luggage, each containing frozen shrimp. However, they spotted black plastic sticking out of one of the masses of seafood, and called in Customs and Border Protection agents for further vetting.?

Ortiz and her travel partner were then escorted to the secondary inspection area where the woman's luggage was further examined. The two freezer bags contained three packs of frozen shrimp, they discovered. One of those packs was found to be concealing two bricks of a white powdery substance, while each of the other two packs of shrimp contained one brick each of a similar substance. There was a total of 4.17 kilograms of suspected narcotics, which when tested returned a positive result for cocaine.?

Ortiz was arrested and charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine, and on June 27, U.S. Magistrate Emile Henderson III ordered her held in detention ahead of her upcoming trial. Her arraignment is scheduled to be heard on July 31.