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Andrew Fahie Receives 11-Year Federal Prison Sentence for Conspiracy Charges; Judge Cites ‘Ultimate Betrayal’

Former British Virgin Islands Premier Convicted of Using Territorial Waters for Drug Trafficking; Defense Highlights Community Contributions, but Judge Emphasizes Severity of Crimes

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Former BVI Premier Andrew Fahie.

Andrew Fahie, convicted of drug trafficking and racketeering conspiracy charges in February, has been sentenced to just over 11 years in prison. Prosecutors argued that the nature and severity of his offenses made the former British Virgin Islands Premier eligible for life in prison, while defense counsel argued that he should receive a 10-year sentence.

On Monday, Judge Kathleen Williams said that the scheme in which Mr. Fahie agreed to use BVI territorial waters as a safe haven for cocaine-bearing ships on their journey from Colombia to the United States was “the ultimate betrayal” of the British Virgin Islanders he served as premier.?

Despite his efforts to “tip the British Virgin Islands from a renowned tourist destination to a haven for narcotrafficking,” Judge Williams acknowledged that Mr. Fahie, over the course of his political career, had helped members of his community further their educational and career aspirations.

Some of those who benefited from these efforts in turn attempted to assist him in his hour of need, writing character reference letters to the judge. A medical doctor recounted how Mr. Fahie had intervened on her behalf when her scholarship from the University of the West Indies had been erroneously rescinded, and again when she needed assistance in her quest to specialize.

Retired judge Rosalind Toulson wrote from Delaware to discuss Mr. Fahie’s work with young BVI athletes. Calling herself a “friend” of the now-convicted felon, she said that she has “seen Andrew dedicate countless hours and resources to assisting athletes from the BVI to navigate the complexities of the U.S. college admissions process.”

Mr. Fahie’s wife and two daughters also wrote on his behalf, describing him as “a respectable, trustworthy, intelligent, honorable man.”

Despite the good work enumerated in the letters, however, Judge Williams declared that “Mr. Fahie lost his way and became involved in this scheme.” Even as she pointed out that the operation that resulted in Mr. Fahie’s arrest was a sting, not involving genuine narcotics or genuine Colombian drug traffickers, the “consequence of what was to happen was quite real,” Judge Williams noted.

After being apprised of his sentence, Mr. Fahie reportedly exchanged a few words with his wife Sheila and two daughters who were sitting behind him, before being led away by marshals. He reportedly plans to appeal his conviction.