

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Travelers Sue After CBP Fails to Send Required Paperwork for Return of \$61,255 Seized at St. Croix Airport

Three men claim CBP agents seized their cash without providing the required seizure notice, preventing them from recovering their funds

Crime / **Published On August 23, 2024 05:52 AM /**

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CBP vehicles at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

A lawsuit filed with the District Court of the Virgin Islands claims that law enforcement agents working at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix confiscated tens of thousands of dollars from three travelers, and then failed to send the necessary paperwork to allow them to request the return of the funds.?

According to court documents, Joseph, Sheldon, and Jahsief Benjamin were traveling out of St. Croix in February 2022 when they were directed to the secondary inspection area by Customs and Border Protection agents. There, large sums of money were removed from the three men - \$25,000 was taken from Joseph, \$26,455 from Sheldon, and \$9,800 from Jahsief.

The Benjamins told the agents, in response to a question about the purpose of their travel and the cash, that they were going to the mainland to purchase vehicles.

According to the claim, the agents kept the money – all \$61, 255 – and told the men that they would be receiving a notice of seizure in the mail, which would contain instructions on how they could challenge that seizure.

“That notice never came,” the lawsuit alleges.

Nevertheless, the men still made several inquiries to Customs and Border Protection San Juan, which has jurisdiction over the USVI. However, they have thus far been unsuccessful.

Now, they are asking the courts to step in, awarding compensatory damages to include the return of the money seized, costs, and any other relief deemed appropriate.

There is no legal limit to the amount of cash a person can carry when flying domestically, however civil asset forfeiture provisions do still apply.?

A response to the lawsuit has not yet been filed.