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"I'm Flying with a Ton of Drugs," Man Admits as He Lands in St. Thomas with 48 Pounds of Marijuana

Tyler Whitmore, arrested after admitting to transporting over 22 kilograms of marijuana, told officers he was unsure of the exact contents but suspected drugs

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Major U.S. carriers at the Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — A man who flew in with suitcases he told officers likely contained drugs is now facing charges in federal court.?

According to court documents, Tyler Keshawn Whitmore landed at the Cyril E. King airport on August 25, and two suitcases with luggage tags bearing his name were alerted on by Customs and Border Protection dogs while they were on the baggage carousel.

The suitcases were pulled off the carousel and x-rayed, with CBP officers identifying what documents submitted to the court described as “suspicious anomalies” within the suitcases. The luggage was placed back on the carousel, and officers waited to see who would come to collect the bags.

They watched as Whitmore took both suitcases off the carousel and proceeded towards the exit, whereupon he was intercepted. He provided officers with a California driver’s license to confirm his identity, and was escorted to a secondary inspection area.?

Whitmore reportedly told the CBP officers that he had not packed the bags himself, but was just transporting the two suitcases for a friend. They were both locked with small padlocks, which officers cut to gain access to the bags.

Upon opening the suitcases, officers reportedly found a top layer of bedding covering several layers of plastic wrapping underneath. The plastic turned out to contain about 30 bags of a green leafy substance, which returned positive results for marijuana when field tested. In total, there were over 22 kilograms of marijuana – over 48 pounds – in the suitcases.?

Whitmore is said to have told the CBP officers that he believed he was stopped and questioned because he was “flying with a ton of drugs.” He said that he had brought the suitcases with him from Los Angeles, and told the officers that while he wasn’t sure of the exact contents of the bags, he was fairly sure that he had been carrying drugs. The friend for which he was transporting the suitcases sent him \$475 to pay for his one-way ticket to St. Thomas, and Whitmore said that he was supposed to have been paid an additional \$2,500 in cash for transporting the suitcases.?

He was arrested and charged with possession with intent to distribute marijuana. U.S. Magistrate Emile Henderson III set bail at \$10,000, which may be satisfied as an unsecured bond. Whitmore has been cleared to reside in Los Angeles, California on home detention while the trial is pending. He may not leave the residence except for certain obligations – work, school, religious services, and medical treatment among them. However, he may not travel outside the state unless he is appearing in court in the USVI. Whitmore is also subject to the usual prohibitions against firearms and other weapons, alcohol and other controlled substances. He has also been placed under the jurisdiction of the probation office in Los Angeles.?

His next court appearance has been scheduled for October 3.