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Former St. Thomas CBP Officer Convicted of Smuggling 16 Kilograms of Cocaine into the U.S.

A federal jury found Ivan Van Beverhoudt guilty of drug trafficking after prosecutors detailed how he used his position to bypass security. Authorities discovered 16 bricks of cocaine in his carry-on luggage upon arrival in Atlanta from St. Thomas.

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Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport By. GETTY IMAGES

ATLANTA — A federal jury has convicted Ivan Van Beverhoudt of St. Thomas USVI, a former U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer, for his role in smuggling more than 16 kilograms of cocaine into the United States. The verdict follows a five-day trial, where prosecutors outlined how Van Beverhoudt exploited his official position to bypass security

measures and transport illicit drugs.

According to Acting U.S. Attorney Richard S. Moultrie, Jr., Van Beverhoudt used his trusted position to evade screening procedures and facilitate drug trafficking. On January 10, 2020, he boarded a commercial flight from St. Thomas bound for Atlanta, Georgia, carrying 16 bricks of cocaine concealed in two carry-on bags. To avoid TSA security screenings, Van Beverhoudt traveled under his official status while armed with his CBP-issued firearm.

Upon his arrival at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, a trained narcotics K-9 officer detected the presence of drugs in his luggage. A subsequent search uncovered the cocaine, thwarting his attempt to transport the narcotics to his final destination in Baltimore, Maryland.

At the conclusion of the trial, Van Beverhoudt was found guilty of conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States, importation of cocaine into the United States, conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, and possession with intent to distribute cocaine. While sentencing guidelines are not binding, the Court will consider them to determine an appropriate sentence. Van Beverhoudt now faces a potential lengthy federal prison term.

The investigation into Van Beverhoudt's crimes was led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), with additional assistance from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bethany L. Rupert and Bret R. Hobson, with Assistant U.S. Attorney Laurel B. Milam also contributing to the prosecution efforts.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta urges parents and children to educate themselves on the dangers of drug use. More information can be found at www.justthinktwice.gov.