The Virgin Islands Consortium

Armed Drug Trafficker Gets 10 Years in Federal Prison Following St. John Cocaine Seizure

Yeral Marrero Reynoso was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison after authorities intercepted 75 kilograms of cocaine and three firearms, including two unmarked assault rifles, during a joint federal-territorial operation near Haulover Bay, St. John.

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ST. THOMAS — A 29-year-old man from the Dominican Republic has been sentenced to a decade in federal prison for his role in a major drug trafficking operation that included the possession of high-powered firearms and over 75 kilograms of cocaine.

Yeral Marrero Reynoso was sentenced on Friday by Chief U.S. District Court Judge Robert A. Molloy to 10 years' imprisonment for possession with intent to distribute 75 kilograms of cocaine and for possessing three firearms, including two assault-style rifles with no serial numbers.

The charges stem from an incident that occurred on August 28, 2024, when federal agents with Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations (CBP-AMO) and Border Patrol (BP) were patrolling the area around Haulover Bay, St. John, at approximately 2:30 p.m. During the patrol, agents observed two men walking along the beach trail—one of whom was carrying what appeared to be an assault-style long gun.

A short time later, agents saw the same two men walking back up the trail, this time carrying three large black duffel bags toward a small parking area. A gray Acura RDX was seen leaving the area shortly after. With assistance from the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), the vehicle was located and stopped by law enforcement.

Inside the vehicle were two men who matched the description of the individuals spotted earlier. In plain view on the rear passenger floorboard were two assault-style rifles; a third weapon—a Glock .40 caliber pistol with an extended magazine—was located on the driver's side floorboard. Notably, neither of the assault-style rifles bore serial numbers, raising further legal concerns about the firearms themselves.

A search of the rear of the vehicle revealed the three duffel bags previously seen by agents. Inside were 61 brick-like packages containing approximately 75 kilograms of cocaine.

The case was investigated by multiple federal and local agencies, including CBP-AMO, Border Patrol, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and VIPD. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Payne on behalf of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the Virgin Islands.

This prosecution was part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) program, which targets high-level criminal organizations threatening U.S. national security and public safety through a coordinated, intelligence-driven, prosecutor-led approach. Additional details on the OCDETF program are available at justice.gov/OCDETF.

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