

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Three Arrested After Cocaine and Marijuana Seized in Separate Interceptions at Cyril E. King Airport

CBP officers seized more than 7 kilograms of cocaine hidden in suitcase lining and over nine kilograms of marijuana in separate inspections at Cyril E. King Airport, resulting in three arrests tied to flights connected to New York, Atlanta, and Orlando.

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — Three men traveling on separate flights through Cyril E. King Airport were arrested this week after U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers allegedly discovered kilograms of cocaine and marijuana concealed in luggage during inspections

at the airport.

According to authorities, the arrests occurred Tuesday and involved passengers connected to flights traveling to or arriving from New York, Atlanta, and Orlando. Each case involved luggage that officers said showed anomalies during screening, prompting further inspection that led to the discovery of narcotics.

One of the arrests involved Leroy Leslie, who was preparing to depart St. Thomas on a Delta Airlines flight bound for New York. During an inspection by CBP officers, agents reported noticing what they described as an “anomaly” in the lining of Leslie’s carry-on suitcase, which prompted officers to direct him to secondary inspection.

During the secondary screening, officers searched both Leslie’s carry-on bag and his checked luggage. Authorities said the bags were emptied, X-rayed, and searched again. During the examination, officers reportedly discovered four sheets hidden within the lining of the luggage. The sheets tested positive for cocaine, according to officials.

A drug-sniffing dog also alerted to the presence of narcotics on the sheets. Authorities said the four sheets had a combined weight of just over seven kilograms.

Leslie was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

In a separate case the same day, Avonte George arrived at Cyril E. King Airport on a Delta Airlines flight from Atlanta, Georgia. During the inspection process, CBP officers conducted an x-ray of George’s checked luggage and reported detecting anomalies within the suitcase.

Authorities said a drug-sniffing dog also alerted to the presence of narcotics in the luggage.

A secondary inspection of the suitcase revealed several bundles containing a green leafy substance. The substance was tested and yielded positive results for marijuana, according to officials.

Authorities reported that the total weight of the marijuana recovered from George’s luggage was approximately 7.15 kilograms.

George reportedly admitted the drugs were his and told law enforcement personnel that he intended to sell the marijuana locally. He was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

A third arrest occurred after luggage from a Southwest Airlines flight arriving from Orlando, Florida was screened by CBP officers.

During the x-ray process, officers reported noticing anomalies in a yellow bag that was tagged with the name Jesus Lopez.

When a man later collected the bag from the conveyor belt, officers approached him and identified him as Faustin Romero. Although Romero reportedly told officers that the bag was not his, authorities escorted him to a secondary screening area.

When the bag was opened during inspection, officers discovered several vacuum-sealed bags inside. The bags contained a green leafy substance that tested positive for marijuana, according to officials.

Authorities reported that the marijuana recovered from the luggage weighed a total of 2.84 kilograms.

Romero was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

All three men appeared before U.S. Magistrate Alan Teague on Thursday.

Each defendant was assigned a public defender to represent them. George was granted release from pre-trial detention on an unsecured bond of \$5,000.

Detention hearings for Romero and Leslie are scheduled for Friday, March 6.