

California Man Charged in St. Thomas After Airport Search Uncovers 10.1 Kilograms of Marijuana

Authorities said Damian Travis Blakesley arrived on a United Airlines flight from San Francisco when a drug-sniffing dog alerted on a suitcase later found to contain 20 vacuum-sealed bundles of marijuana weighing 10.1 kilograms.

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ST. THOMAS – A California man is facing drug trafficking charges in the Virgin Islands District Court after a drug-sniffing dog reportedly detected over 10 kilograms of marijuana in his suitcase.

Damian Travis Blakesley was arrested in early April after arriving in St. Thomas from a United Airlines Flight from San Francisco. During routine screening of checked luggage on the airport baggage ramp, a drug-sniffing dog alerted on a large pink suitcase tagged with Mr. Blakesley's

last name.

Customs and Border Patrol officers waited until Mr. Blakesley retrieved the suitcase before approaching and directing him to a secondary screening area. A physical inspection of the bag yielded 20 vacuum-sealed black bundles. The plant material inside returned positive results when field-tested for marijuana. The total weight of the recovered substance was 10.1 kilograms.

Blakesley reportedly admitted that the suitcase was his, but told officers that he did not pack it himself, nor did he see the marijuana inside the luggage when the bag was open in front of him. He was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

Blakesley appeared before U.S. Magistrate Alan Teauge, who ordered that he be released on an unsecured \$1000 appearance bond. He will be allowed to reside in California with a court-approved third-party custodian, but not allowed to travel outside the continental United States without written permission from the Court.

The next court appearance for Mr. Blakesley is scheduled for May 13.

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