

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Man Pleads Guilty to Possession of Prison Contraband

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Paul Girard, 27, pleaded guilty on Jan. 9 in federal court on St. Croix to Possession of Prison Contraband, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent-in-Charge Vito S. Guarino announced.

Girard entered guilty pleas to four counts, including two counts to possessing cell phones and chargers, one count of possessing a knife, and one of possessing a shank or homemade knife.

According to the plea agreement, on Nov. 16, 2012, Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections (BOC) officials raided a cell at the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility occupied by

Girard and another inmate, and seized two cell phones and 24 'dime' bags of marijuana.

Text messages from one of the cell phones contained Girard's nickname and phone number. On Jan. 16, 2013, BOC officials searched another cell occupied only by Girard and seized a knife, a cell phone and 34 dime bags of marijuana. The phone contained several photos of Girard.

On June 18, 2013, (BOC) officials again searched a third cell occupied solely by Girard, and seized a cell phone and a dime bag of marijuana. The confiscated phone contained several photos of Girard.

On April 7, 2014, a federal search warrant allowed agents to search a fourth cell occupied solely by Girard, where they seized a homemade weapon or shank, an iPad, and marijuana. The iPad contained a video of Girard and others in a Golden Grove prison cell.

In prison, cell phone pose a real danger, as they can be used to conduct drug transactions, both in and out of the prison, Sharpe pointed out. The U.S. Attorney also said the phones could be used to arrange 'hits' on other inmates and persons in the community.

Girard faces a maximum sentence of one year imprisonment and a fine of \$100,000 on the cell phone counts, and a maximum sentence of five years of incarceration and a fine of \$250,000 on the knife and shank counts.

Sentencing has been set for May 13.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Rhonda Williams-Henry and Alphonso Andrews prosecuted the case.