

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Federal Officers Arrest Pair Attempting to Smuggle Marijuana Into Territory

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ST. THOMAS -- Sierra Wimberly, 25, and Noelle Bishopel, 27, both Atlanta, Georgia residents, made their initial appearances on April 7, 2016, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller after being charged in separate complaints with possession with intent to distribute marijuana, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced on Friday. Ms. Wimberly and Mr. Bishopel were both released on unsecured \$10,000 bonds pending further proceedings.

According to the complaints, on April 6, 2016, at the Cyril E. King Airport, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (C.B.P.) K-9 detected narcotics in checked bags belonging to Ms. Wimberly and Mr. Bishopel, who had arrived on a Delta

Airlines flight from Atlanta. When Ms. Wimberly and Mr. Bishopel de-planed the aircraft, they were taken to secondary inspection where their checked bags were examined. C.B.P. officers seized and field-tested approximately 4.9 kilograms of marijuana from Ms. Wimberly's bag and approximately 10.25 kilograms of marijuana from Mr. Bishopel's bag.

Under federal law if convicted of possession with intent to distribute marijuana, Ms. Wimberly and Mr. Bishopel each face a maximum of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. This case is being investigated by C.B.P. and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Everard Potter.

United States Attorney Sharpe reminds the public that a complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.