

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Federal Jury Convicts St. Thomas Woman Of Participating In Cocaine Conspiracy

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ST. THOMAS -- On February 1, 2017, Kanya Tirado, 38, of St. Thomas, was found guilty by a federal jury of one count of cocaine conspiracy and two counts of possession of cocaine, U.S. Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced Thursday.

Tirado faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years of incarceration, a maximum fine of \$10,000,000, and a special assessment of \$100. Judge Curtis Gomez remanded Tirado into the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service pending her sentencing on June 6, 2017.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Tirado was a member of drug organizations led by Nilda Morton. Morton supplied cocaine to Vanier Murraine utilizing Delta Airlines employees Taheeda George and Roniqua Hart, who used their security clearances at the Cyril E. King Airport to smuggle Morton's cocaine to Tirado, Dellana Magner, Kinia Blyden, and Jerrisha Rawlins, after completing their pre-boarding security clearance, but before boarding their commercial flights to the U.S. mainland.

On three occasions between December 2015 and February 2016, Tirado smuggled more than five kilograms of Morton's cocaine to the U.S. mainland after receiving it from Hart and Taheeda George in the bathrooms at the Cyril E. King airport. Security surveillance at the airport captured the activities of the defendants as they entered the public restroom located in the Spirit Airlines lounge where Hart and George removed vacuum-sealed packages of cocaine from their bodies and placed them in the couriers' carry-on bags before boarding their flights. After the cocaine was sold stateside, Nilda Morton arranged for her brother Rasheem Morton, Tirado, Dellana Magner, Te'Nae George, Kinia Blyden, Jerrisha Rawlins, Roniqua Hart and Monique David to transport the cash proceeds back to St. Thomas where she took possession of the money. The investigation culminated on July 1, 2016, with the arrest of Dellana Magner after she smuggled 3 kilograms of cocaine onboard an American Airlines flight destined for Miami.

Twelve members of Morton's drug trafficking organization pleaded guilty to drug related charges. Vanier Murraine, 34, a native of St. Thomas and resident of Detroit; Christopher Butler, 30, and Drue Williams, III, 35, of Twinsburgh, Ohio; Nilda Morton, 32, Taheeda George, 37, Roniqua Hart, 24, Dellana Magner, 23, Kinia Blyden, 23, and Jerrisha Rawlins, 23, of St. Thomas, all pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute cocaine. Rasheem Morton, 36, Monique David, 40, and Te'Nae George, 23, of St. Thomas, pleaded guilty to money laundering conspiracy. All defendants were remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service pending sentencing on June 1, 2017.

This case is the result of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Pittsburgh, New York, Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Thomas. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Delia L. Smith.