

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Puerto Rico Man Sentenced To 68 Months For Conspiracy And Possession Of Cocaine

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ST. CROIX -- District Court Judge Wilma A. Lewis, on October 29, 2018, sentenced Jesus Burgos-Montanez, age 31, of Puerto Rico, to 68 months in prison for conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced. Judge Lewis also sentenced Burgos-Montanez to three years of supervised release, and ordered him to pay a fine of \$2,000.000 and a special assessment of \$200.00.

On June 26, 2018, a federal jury convicted Burgos-Montanez along with five codefendants on cocaine related charges. Evidence at trial revealed that the organization planned for the retrieval of over 300 kilograms of cocaine during the period of the

conspiracy. Approximately 223 kilograms of cocaine were actually distributed. Law enforcement efforts to interdict the drug shipments were successful, beginning in 2015. On November 14, 2015, law enforcement agents apprehended four members of the organization, including Hodge and Burgos, on a beach at Knight's Bay on St. Croix and seized 87 kilograms of cocaine packed in four suitcases.

Fourteen individuals were originally charged as part of the drug trafficking organization. Prior to trial six defendants entered guilty pleas and were sentenced. Evidence at trial revealed that Burgos-Montanez, a Puerto Rico resident, and two coconspirators traveled on a boat from St. Croix on November 13, 2015 to retrieve cocaine mid-sea. At about 2:00 a.m. on November 14, 2015, law enforcement agents apprehended Burgos-Montanez, along with three co-conspirators, on a beach at Knight's Bay on St. Croix and seized 87 kilograms of cocaine packed in four suitcases.

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The case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Alphonso G. Andrews, Jr. and Everard E. Potter.