

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Four Guyanese Men Plead Guilty To Possession Of 3,769 Kilograms Of Cocaine On Board Vessel

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ST. CROIX -- United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced today that Mohamed Hoseain, age 70, and Richard La Cruz, age 51, both of Guyana, pleaded guilty on November 28, 2018 in federal court to possession of cocaine on board a vessel. Attorney Shappert further announced that Neville Jeffrey, age 66, and Mark Anthony Williams, age 32, also of Guyana, pleaded guilty on November 29, 2018 and December 3, 2018 respectively, in federal court to the same offense.

According to plea agreements filed with the court, the United States Coast Guard Cutter Napier, on February 16, 2017, intercepted a suspicious vessel in a joint operation with the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard approximately seventy nautical miles north of

Paramaribo, Suriname, in international waters. The vessel, later identified as the LADY MICHELLE, was located in a known drug trafficking route and registered with St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The U.S. Coast Guard boarded the vessel pursuant to a bilateral agreement between the United States and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. They discovered 185 bales containing numerous rectangular shaped packages of cocaine in the vessel's fish hold weighing 3,769 kilograms. The drugs had a street value in the U.S. Virgin Islands of approximately \$71 million. Hoseain was identified as the captain and claimed that they were in search of a missing vessel for two months. La Cruz was identified as the engineer and Jeffrey and Williams as crew members.

Hoseain, La Cruz, Jeffrey and Williams face up to life imprisonment for the offense and a fine of up to \$10,000,000. Sentencing dates for Hoseain and La Cruz have been set for March 28, 2019 and March 29, 2019 respectively; and for Jeffrey and Williams for April 3, 2019.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. It is being prosecuted by Assistant February U.S. Attorney Alphonso Andrews, Jr.