

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## St. Croix Woman Charged with Smuggling Cocaine Onboard American Airlines Flight

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ST. CROIX -- Tillisa Caesar, 32, on Monday appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge George Cannon for an advice of rights hearing after being taken into custody by the Homeland Security Investigation. Caesar was charged with possession with intent to distribute, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced. At the conclusion of the hearing, Magistrate Cannon remanded Caesar pending her detention hearing on September 19, 2019.

According to court records, on July 10, Ceasar recruited Amarrah Stevens of St. Thomas to act as a courier to smuggle several packages of cocaine from St. Croix to Miami onboard American Airlines flight #2227.

On July 11, after boarding the flight, Caesar instructed Stevens to retrieve two brick-shaped packages of cocaine that were placed in the life vest bin located under her seat. The investigation revealed that the packages of cocaine were placed on the aircraft during the overnight hours of July 10 while it sat on the tarmac. Caesar also purchased Stevens' airline tickets and deposit cash in Stevens' Banco Popular account before and after her flight to Miami.

Surveillance video footage shows Caesar making cash deposits into Stevens' account at the Sunny Isles branch of Banco Popular on St. Croix, one of which was made when Stevens was in flight to Miami. Upon arrival in Miami, Stevens and another male passenger, Lloyd Ferdinand, were arrested by Customs and Border Patrol, and were found to be in possession of a total of five brick-shaped packages of cocaine. Caesar currently is awaiting trial on October 28 in Ft. Lauderdale on cocaine importation charges.

This case is being investigated by the Homeland Security Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Delia L. Smith.

United States Attorney Shappert reminds the public that an information is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty.