

The Virgin Islands Consortium

AMO Seizes \$1.1 Million Inside Boat Navigating From Vieques To St. Thomas

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CBP Air and Marine Operations

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Marine Interdiction agents on Tuesday seized more than \$1.1 million in undeclared currency found inside a black bag dumped from a vessel traversing from Vieques, Puerto Rico to St. Thomas, CBP has announced. Three men were arrested.

“Transnational criminal organizations seek to conceal and move currency from their activities,” stated Johnny Morales, director of Air and Marine Operations for the

Caribbean Air and Marine Branch. "Our agents continue to use advanced aeronautical and maritime capabilities to detect and interdict them throughout our coastal borders."

In the early morning hours of Sep. 17, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) Marine Interdiction agents (MIAs) in St. Thomas received information about a suspicious boat departing the vicinity of Vieques, CBP said.

The MIAs located a 25' "yola" type vessel with twin outboard engines without navigation lights and moving east toward St. Thomas on a course that would take them into Brewer's Bay.

The MIAs activated the blue lights, and the vessel operator failed to heave continuing toward St. Thomas. The agents fired warning shots and the vessel continued making evasive moves, CBP said.

One engine was disabled but the vessel continued on one engine while two of the occupants jettisoned a large black bag off the port side. Agents marked the location with a glow stick. Once the vessel stopped, the agents boarded the vessel and secured the three occupants.

The MIAs recovered the black bag from the water finding currency inside individual vacuumed sealed bags.

CBP said agents arrested the three occupants and turned over custody to special agents with U.S. Homeland Security Investigations.