

St. Croix Man Who Fled Scene After VIPD Traffic Stop Pleads Guilty to Possession With Intent to Distribute Cocaine

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ST. CROIX — Malachi Benjamin, 25, pleaded guilty before Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller to possession with intent to distribute cocaine, United States Attorney Gretchen Shappert announced Friday. Benjamin remains detained on separate drug conspiracy charges. His sentencing date will occur at a later date.

According to court records, on June 14, 2018, Virgin Islands Police Department officers conducted a traffic stop in Upper Love, Frederiksted, of a vehicle operated by Glenn David with Benjamin in the front passenger seat. After the traffic stop, officers approached Benjamin to advise him that he was a person of interest in recent double homicide on St. Croix, and Benjamin responded by immediately fleeing the scene on foot.

After Benjamin fled the scene, David, the driver and owner of the vehicle, granted officers permission to search his vehicle. A forensic team of VIPD officers later recovered three pre-packaged baggies of suspected cocaine hidden inside of a Pepperidge Farm container. The suspected cocaine weighed approximately 2 ounces and was recovered from the passenger side floor of the vehicle where Benjamin had been seated. A field test of the contents of the baggies yielded a positive test result for cocaine.

The forensic team also collected buccal swabs from cocaine baggies hidden inside of the Pepperidge Farm container and submitted the swabs for DNA analysis. When compared with DNA previously collected from Benjamin, a DNA laboratory confirmed that Benjamin was the source of DNA collected from the cocaine wrappings.

This case was investigated by DEA and the VIPD, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Delia L. Smith and Donna Rainwater.