

DR Woman Who Operated Underground Nightclub in St. Thomas Pleads Guilty to Transporting Women in USVI for Prostitution

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ST. THOMAS — Yohanna Gonzalez-McFarlane, 39, of the Dominican Republic, appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller in District Court and entered a guilty plea to four counts charging her with bringing illegal immigrants to the United States for financial gain, in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii), and to transportation for prostitution, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2421, U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced.

Pursuant to the plea agreement, Gonzalez-McFarlane admitted to illegally bringing in and transporting women from Venezuela and the Dominican Republic in 2018 and 2019 for the purpose of having the women perform commercial sex acts at the Underground Nightclub in St.

Thomas. As part of her plea agreement, Gonzalez-McFarlane admitted to profiting financially from employing twelve different undocumented female aliens to perform commercial sex acts at the Underground Nightclub, one of whom was just seventeen years old.

Gonzalez-McFarlane acknowledged and agreed that many of the women were required to perform commercial sex acts at the Underground Nightclub to pay off their smuggling debt. She further admitted that the nightclub had three small rooms in the rear of the club, each having a bed which was used for commercial sex acts. Gonzalez-McFarlane faces up to a maximum of 55 years imprisonment with a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison. She further faces possible deportation or removal from the United States, mandatory sex offender registration, and a minimum term of supervised release of five years and up to life. Her sentencing will be scheduled for a future date.

This case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and assisted and supported by the Virgin Islands Police Department, United States Marshals Service, United States Postal Investigative Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Customs and Border Protection. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Meredith Edwards and Donna Rainwater.