

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Missouri Man Living on St. Croix Sentenced to 10 Years for Attempted Coercion and Enticement, and Failure to Register a Sex Offender

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert, District of the Virgin Islands, announced that Robert Black, age 50, originally of Missouri, was sentenced today on the charges of attempted coercion and enticement and failure to register as a sex offender.

On the attempted coercion and enticement charge, U.S. District Court Judge Wilma Lewis sentenced Black to a 120-month (ten-year) prison sentence, followed by a ten-year period of supervised release, a fine of \$1,000, and a special assessment of \$100.

On the failure to register as a sex offender charge, Judge Lewis sentenced Black to a 120-month prison sentence, followed by a five-year period of supervised release, and a special assessment of \$100. The prison sentence and period of supervised release will run concurrent with the attempted coercion and enticement sentence.

According to court documents, Homeland Security Investigations initiated a law enforcement operation investigating online predators seeking to exploit children on St. Croix.

Agents working online in an undercover capacity created personas in online forums and applications designed to facilitate interactions between individuals. On August 12, 2019, Black initiated contact with an undercover agent on the application Grindr by sending a picture of his naked torso and another of his genitals. A dialogue ensued during which the undercover agent stated that he was 14 years old. Later, Black discussed the sexual activity in which he wished to participate with the undercover agent. A meeting was arranged for August 16, 2019, at which time Black was arrested by federal agents on the Boardwalk in Christiansted.

Black is a convicted sex offender from Missouri who failed to register locally when he moved to the Virgin Islands in 2018. In 2000, he was convicted in Missouri of Statutory Sodomy in the 2nd degree. As a result of this conviction, he was classified as a Tier III Offender who was required to register every 90 days for his lifetime under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.

Black has an outstanding parole violation warrant from Missouri for a prior sex offender registration violation and has an outstanding trafficking in methamphetamine parole violation warrant from Georgia.

The case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel H. Huston.