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Feds Unseal Massive Gun Trafficking Scheme on St. Croix Involving Couple; Over 100 Illegally Manufactured Firearms Sold Throughout USVI

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for the District of the Virgin Islands announced today that Somalie Bruce, age 35, and Jeanorah Williams, age 26, of St. Croix were arrested for firearms trafficking; conspiracy to engage in firearms trafficking; shipping, transporting and receiving firearms with intent to commit a felony; and local territorial charges for unlawful possession of a firearm, and ammunition. Bruce was also charged in separate counts with distribution of at least 500 grams of cocaine under federal law and possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number under federal and territorial law. The indictment was unsealed today.

According to the indictment filed in this case, beginning in 2016 and continuing through 2020, Bruce and Williams engaged in an unlicensed firearm trafficking business with others known and

unknown to the Grand Jury. The indictment alleges Bruce and Williams ordered gun parts and accessories from various companies in North Carolina and Florida and had the items delivered to their respective post office boxes in St. Croix. Williams and Bruce purchased money orders totaling over \$60,000 from the United States Post Office to pay for the firearm parts. Thereafter, Bruce built pistols and rifles and sold them to others persons knowing, or having a reasonable cause to believe, that these individuals would not register the firearms, as required by law, with the Virgin Islands Police Department, an offense punishable by a minimum of ten years in prison.

On December 8, 2020, Bruce and Williams were apprehended with multiple firearms and ammunition in their possession. In addition, Bruce possessed a Glock firearm with an obliterated serial number in violation of federal and territorial law.

The court appearance is set before Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. for a detention hearing for Bruce. Bail was set for Williams in the amount of \$20,000.

An indictment is merely a charging document, and it is not evidence of guilt, said the U.S. Attorney's Office. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

This case is being investigated by the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) with assistance from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), and Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA). It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Alessandra P. Serano and Juan Albino.

This case is part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative and Homeland Security Investigations-Arms and Strategic Technology Proliferation Program. For more information on the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods and the Homeland Security Investigations-Arms and Strategic Technology Proliferation Initiative, see: <https://www.justice.gov/psn> and <https://www.ice.gov/investigations/astp>.