

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Georgia Man Who Heard Marijuana Was More Expensive on St. Croix Arrested After Stowing 4 Pounds in Luggage to Sell on Island

Crime / **Published On May 20, 2021 07:12 AM /**

Staff Consortium **May 20, 2021**



MARIJUANA By. GETTY IMAGES

ST. THOMAS — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Wednesday that Ra’Kheel Velasquez of Georgia was arrested May 14, 2021 on a warrant signed by District Court Magistrate Judge George W. Cannon, Jr. for the charges of possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute and possession of marijuana with intent to distribute by person on board aircraft.

According to court documents, Velasquez, age 23, is accused of traveling on March 10, 2021 to St. Croix from Georgia with approximately four pounds of marijuana in his luggage.

Per the affidavit in support of criminal complaint, Homeland Security Investigations Special Agents were contacted March 10, 2021 by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers regarding an inbound airline passenger in possession of approximately four pounds of marijuana at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport. CBP officers conducted a physical examination of a large red suitcase, later claimed by Velasquez, and discovered suspected marijuana which weighed approximately 1.76 kilograms. The suspected marijuana was field tested by CBP officers and yielded a positive result for marijuana.

According to court documents, Velasquez informed CBP that he had about four pounds of marijuana in the bag, which he brought from Atlanta and planned to sell on St. Croix, since he heard that the marijuana prices were higher in the USVI. In addition, agents said Velasquez told them he traveled to St. Croix to attend a family member's funeral.

An initial appearance and bond hearing occurred on Saturday, May 15, 2021 with a preliminary hearing to be scheduled by the court.

The case is being investigated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Melissa P. Ortiz.

United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert reminds the public that a criminal complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.