

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Man Who Conspired With Airport Employee to Smuggle Two Kilograms of Cocaine Through Henry E. Rohlsen Airport Convicted in Federal Court

Crime / **Published On June 01, 2021 05:47 PM /**

Staff Consortium **June 01, 2021**



Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix

ST. CROIX — U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced on Tuesday that after a week-long trial, a St. Croix federal jury convicted Keithley Parris, age 33, of St. Croix of conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute, and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute.

The verdict was returned by the jury on Friday.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Parris conspired with co-defendants Don-Luke George and Zion Hazel in April of 2018 to smuggle 2 kilograms of cocaine through HERA with the intent to transport the cocaine to Miami via an American Airlines flight.

Evidence presented at the trial showed that Parris organized and planned the operation, recruited George and Hazel to participate, supplied the cocaine to George, paid George \$1,000 to bring the cocaine into the airport, and subsequently directed and monitored the operation via text messages with George and Hazel while the operation was unfolding at the airport.

On April 12, 2018, George, who was employed at the airport, smuggled the four bricks of cocaine into the passenger waiting area of the airport and delivered them to Hazel in the handicap stall of the men's restroom. Hazel was a passenger on the outgoing American Airlines flight but was intercepted with the cocaine prior to boarding his flight by Customs and Border Protection officers.

Customs and Border Protection and Homeland Security Investigations investigated the case. The DEA Southeast Laboratory in Miami analyzed the cocaine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel H. Huston prosecuted the case.

This prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten the United States by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.