

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Man Who Conspired With Others to Smuggle Cocaine Through St. Croix Airport Sentenced to Five Years in Federal Prison

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**Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix.**

ST. CROIX — U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Wednesday that Keithley Parris, age 34 of St. Croix was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison by visiting Judge Ann E. Thompson for conspiracy to possess cocaine with intent to distribute, and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. His sentence will be followed by 4 years of supervised release, a fine of \$1,000 and a \$200 special assessment.

Parris was previously convicted on those charges after a week-long jury trial on May 28, 2021.

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 the St. Croix Henry E. Rohlsen Airport 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.

As part of this scheme, 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.