

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Men Who Concealed Over \$1 Million on Vessel Bound for St. Thomas Plead Guilty

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ST. THOMAS — Julius Alvarez-Gonzalez and Jimmy Garcia-Quinonez of Vieques, PR, each entered guilty pleas to the charge of concealing over one million dollars in cash on a vessel outfitted for smuggling, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for the District of the Virgin Islands announced Thursday.

According to court documents, on July 26, 2021, Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine agents stopped a vessel traveling without navigational lights, heading toward the western portion of St. Thomas. Prior to boarding, agents observed the defendants onboard the vessel. When the defendants saw the agents, they threw a large duffel bag overboard. Agents subsequently recovered and searched the duffel bag, which contained

over one million dollars in U.S. currency.

The boat captain, Alvarez, faces 33 months incarceration and Garcia faces 30 months incarceration. Both defendants face a maximum fine of up to \$250,000 dollars, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years. Sentencing will be scheduled at a later date.

This prosecution is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces' (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.