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# St. Croix Man Who Caused a Semi-Automatic Pistol to Be Shipped to Territory Sentenced to 58 Months in Prison

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## PLR-16 Semi- Automatic Pistol

ST. CROIX — William Payne, 39, of St. Croix, was sentenced on January 9 in District Court on one federal count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert has announced.

Chief Judge Wilma A. Lewis sentenced Payne to a prison term of 58 months, to be following by a 3-year term of supervised release, a fine of \$2,000, and a special assessment of \$100.

Payne had previously pleaded guilty to the possession of a firearm by a convicted felon count on July 24, 2019, and was ordered detained pending sentencing on October 30, 2019.

According to court documents, on April 28, 2017, Payne and another individual traveled to Southern Oaks Gun & Pawn, a federally licensed firearms dealer, located in Orlando, Florida. Payne was present when the other individual purchased a KEL TEC PLR-16 Semi-Automatic Pistol.

On May 2, 2017, Payne caused the same firearm, two high-capacity magazines, and ammunition to be shipped by Tropical Shipping via seaborne container freight shipment from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to St. Croix. The firearm, high capacity magazines, and ammunition thus traveled in or affected interstate commerce.

On May 16, 2017, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers conducted an inspection of an inbound Tropical Shipping freight container. Upon inspection of a pallet of commercial goods destined for a local St. Croix business, CBP officers located the KEL TEC PLR-16 Semi-Automatic Pistol, the two high-capacity magazines for the firearm, and 206 rounds of 5.56x45mm ammunition hidden amongst a larger shipment of items for commercial use. The box containing the firearm, high-capacity magazines, and ammunition bore a prior shipping label addressed to Payne at a Florida address.

On May 17, 2017, Homeland Security Investigations special agents and other federal special agents conducted a controlled delivery of the firearm, high-capacity magazines, and ammunition. Payne and the owner of the small business arrived at Tropical Shipping to receive the shipment.

Payne was arrested after the pallet containing the KEL TEC PLR-16 Semi-automatic Pistol, high capacity magazines, and ammunition was loaded onto the pickup that was being used to transport the pallet from Tropical Shipping.

Payne was previously convicted of three felony offenses: in 2000, for grand theft of a motor vehicle; in 2001, for resisting officer with violence, and in 2007, for delivery of cocaine, all in the Circuit Court for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, Orange County, Florida.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel H. Huston prosecuted the case.