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Owner of Brothel in St. Thomas Pleads Guilty to Transporting Illegal Immigrants for Purpose of Prostitution

Crime / **Published On June 28, 2022 11:04 AM /**

Staff Consortium **June 28, 2022**

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ST. THOMAS — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced Tuesday that Ramona Rivera Luna, 65, a Dominican Republic national, pleaded guilty on Monday before United States Magistrate Ruth Miller to one count of transporting an individual in foreign commerce for the purpose of prostitution, and three counts of bringing illegal aliens to the United States for financial gain.

According to court documents, Rivera Luna owned and operated The Embers Guest House as a house of prostitution and arranged for female illegal aliens from the Dominican Republic and Venezuela to be smuggled into St. Thomas, to live and work as prostitutes at her establishment.

Rivera Luna admitted that she lured some of the women into coming to St. Thomas under the false pretense of providing them with legitimate employment as bartenders. She further admitted that she financially benefitted from this arrangement by requiring the women to pay her for their trips to St. Thomas and charging them rent and a percentage of the money they earned from performing commercial sex acts at The Embers.

The investigation of this case was led by Homeland Security Investigations, and assisted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and United States Postal Inspection Service. Assistant United States Attorney Meredith Edwards prosecuted the case.

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