

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Pleads Guilty to Transporting 593 Kilograms of Marijuana on Board a Go-Fast Boat

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ST. THOMAS — Hansel Andres Centeno Arriola pled guilty on Friday to possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, U.S. Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Tuesday.

According to information provided in court and in court documents, on October 18, 2019, the defendant was on board a go-fast style vessel that was intercepted by a United States Coast Guard (USCG) cutter while on routine patrol. USCG crew members first sighted the go-fast vessel in international waters at approximately 45 nautical miles north of Malpelo Island, Colombia. The vessel did not have any display indicating its nationality and the defendant, the captain of the vessel, told members of the USCG Boarding Team

that the vessel was without nationality. Twenty one bales of marijuana, consisting of approximately 593 kilograms, were located on board the vessel and seized. The defendant confessed to his involvement and told agents that he was hired as a boat captain to transport the marijuana from Colombia to Costa Rica. He stated that he was to be paid a total of sixty thousand (\$60,000) dollars for his work.

The defendant will be sentenced at a later date.

This case is being investigated by the United States Coast Guard and the Virgin Islands Drug Enforcement Agency. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Adam Sleeper and Donna Rainwater.