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British VI National Charged with Destroying Cell Phone to Impede Investigation and with Illegal Entry into U.S.

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BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS — Juwon Cordelle Potter, a citizen of the British Virgin Islands, was charged with destroying a record or tangible object with the intent to impede a federal investigation and with knowingly and willfully entering the United States at a time and place other than as designated by Immigration officers, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the USVI has announced.

Mr. Potter made his initial appearance before U.S. District Judge Curtis Gomez on Thursday. After preliminary and detention hearings on Friday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller ordered Juwon Cordelle Potter detained.

The complaint alleges that Customs and Border Patrol marine interdiction agents stopped a vessel leaving United States territorial waters and entering British Virgin Islands waters. According to court documents, the captain of the vessel, Mr. Potter, permitted a search of his phone, which revealed a picture of two men and several messages stating “just the two men?” and “send the 2000 WU to Juwon Potter.”

An agent from Homeland Security Investigations placed the phone on a work surface on the CBP vessel and then moved to the bow to conduct record checks. The agent subsequently heard a splash, observed Juwon Cordelle Potter in the vicinity of where the phone had been placed, and observed the screen of the phone as it sank into the water.

This case is being investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and CBP Air and Marine, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Adam Sleeper.

United States Attorney Shappert reminds the public that a complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty.