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Cherise King, St. Croix YRC Teacher, Faces 15 Years in Prison for Alleged Sexual Abuse of a Minor

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Cherise King.

ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced on Wednesday that an indictment has been unsealed by the District Court, charging Cherise King, a 39-year-old paraprofessional teacher at St. Croix Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC), with a single count of sexual abuse of a ward or minor.

If convicted, King could face a maximum of 15 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine the sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The indictment alleges that between September 9 and September 15, 2022, King engaged in sexual acts with a male juvenile detainee, over the age of 12 but under the age of 16, who had been incarcerated at the YRC, a youth detention facility. King's role at the center as a paraprofessional teacher placed her in a position of trust and authority over the minors in her care.

The case is being jointly investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and the Virgin Islands Police Department, with Assistant United States Attorney Evan Rikhye leading the prosecution. This investigation is part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. The project aims to marshal federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children through the internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims.

United States Attorney Delia L. Smith has reminded the public that an indictment is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <http://www.justice.gov/psc>.

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