

The Virgin Islands Consortium

From St. Thomas to NY: 59 iPhones Stolen in Grand Scheme; Woman Sentenced

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The iPhone XS was released in 2018.

ST. THOMAS — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced recently that New York resident Keyla Mateo has been sentenced to a four-year probation term by Chief District Judge Robert A. Molloy, following her conviction on charges of conspiracy to transport stolen iPhones.

The court documents reveal that from May to July 2018, Mateo, along with three co-conspirators, was involved in a scheme of stealing and transporting iPhones from St. Thomas to the Bronx, NY, where the phones were later sold.

The elaborate plot included one of Mateo's co-conspirators reaching out to cell phone carriers like Sprint and AT&T, posing as legitimate customers. These false representations allowed them to add cell phones to the unsuspecting customers' accounts without their knowledge or approval.

Moreover, the co-conspirators would then have the iPhones mailed to another member of the group at a post office box in St. Thomas. Once the phones arrived, Mateo was responsible for arranging their shipment from St. Thomas to her address in New York.

Upon the iPhones' arrival in New York, Mateo sold them. The illicit operation involved a total of 59 stolen cell phones, each valued at approximately \$1,000. All defendants, including Mateo, entered a guilty plea to the conspiracy. The co-conspirators' trials are still pending.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the U.S. Postal Service were responsible for the thorough investigation of the case. Assistant United States Attorney Evan Rikhye took on the task of prosecuting the case.