

## Airport Employee and Passenger Arrested in Separate Drug Trafficking Cases at St. Thomas Airport

Officials said a ramp agent was found with 3.34 kilograms of cocaine during a routine security screening, while an inbound Delta passenger from Atlanta was linked to two suitcases containing 28.70 kilograms of marijuana.

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — Two men, including an airport employee, were arrested Wednesday at Cyril E. King Airport in separate drug trafficking cases involving cocaine and marijuana. One was detained after airport security officers found suspected narcotics in his backpack during a routine screening as he reported to work, while the other was stopped after officers inspecting luggage

from an inbound Delta flight from Atlanta identified suspicious suitcases that were later linked to him.

Both men were charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute and appeared separately before a U.S. magistrate judge on Thursday, with detention hearings set for Friday.

Officials said Aslyn Thomas reported to work Wednesday as a ramp agent and underwent a routine security inspection upon arrival. During a search of his backpack, security personnel reportedly found three plastic bundles resembling bricks.

Port Authority officers were notified and responded with a drug-sniffing dog, which alerted on the backpack. A second dog also indicated the presence of narcotics on the packages themselves after they were removed, officers said.

Thomas was then detained and escorted to the secondary inspection area, where the three bundles were field-tested and returned positive results for cocaine. Officers calculated the total weight at 3.34 kilograms. Thomas was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

On the same day, officials said Devaunte Butler arrived as an inbound passenger on a Delta flight from Atlanta, Georgia.

Customs and Border Protection officers inspecting checked luggage from that flight noticed two hard-cover suitcases that appeared to show “anomalies” on x-ray. One of the suitcases was then physically inspected, and officers reportedly found “large hard objects wrapped in clothing” inside.

The two bags were placed with the rest of the luggage from the flight in the baggage claim area, and police detained the man who arrived to retrieve them. He was identified as Devaunte Butler and was escorted to the secondary inspection area for further screening.

There, officers found more than 60 bundles of a green leafy substance with a total weight of 28.70 kilograms. The substance returned positive results when field-tested for marijuana.

Like Thomas, Butler was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

The two men appeared separately on Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Alan Teague, who scheduled detention hearings for Friday afternoon.

In Butler’s case, federal prosecutors indicated that they will not object to his release from detention pending trial. In Thomas’s case, the government indicated that it prefers he remain detained while awaiting trial.