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PRESS RELEASE

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Boat Captain Indicted for His Involvement in Death of Parasailer During Excursion

St. Thomas, USVI – A federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging Kyle Coleman, a boat captain, with causing the death of a woman through misconduct, negligence, and inattention to his duties involving a parasailing excursion last year, announced United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe and Jonathan Sall, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Coast Guard South East Region Criminal Investigation Services.

Coleman, 32, was arrested Wednesday and made his initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller in district court. He was released on a \$10,000 unsecured bond. He is scheduled to be arraigned on November 14, 2012.

According to the one-count indictment, Coleman was the captain of the motor vessel, Turtle, that was conducting parasailing excursions just south of Water Island on November 15, 2011, when a passenger, Bernice G. Kraftcheck, was killed. According to the indictment, Kraftcheck and her daughter, Danielle Haese, were hoisted into the air for the parasail ride as wind conditions were deteriorating. The strong winds and a weak tow-line caused the tow-line to break, resulting in the parasail separating from the vessel and the two women falling into the water. The wind then propelled the parasail, with the women still attached, at a very high rate

of speed causing the death of Kraftcheck and serious injuries to Haese.

“After the tragic event last November, Coast Guard marine casualty investigators and special agents from San Juan and our Marine Safety Detachment in St Thomas aggressively investigated this matter leading to Wednesday’s arrest of the defendant and the surrender of his merchant mariners license in June,” said Capt. Drew W. Pearson, Sector San Juan commander. “The Coast Guard takes safety at sea very seriously, and will ensure that any mariner who causes another’s death through misconduct, negligence, and inattention to his duties is held accountable in a court of law.”

An indictment is a formal charging document brought by a grand jury, and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent until the United States proves beyond a reasonable doubt that he is guilty. If convicted, the defendant could face up to 10 years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine.

This matter is being investigated by the United States Coast Guard, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Everard E. Potter.