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Jamaican Drug Dealer Arrested By US immigration Agents

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PHILADELPHIA, CMC – The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) agency on Wednesday said that officers from its Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) arrested an “illegally-present” Jamaican drug dealer, who was released from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania custody, “despite the presence of an ICE detainer filed with local authorities.”

ICE said that Travas Anthony Vassell, 30 was admitted into the United States in New York, on May 24, 2009, on a non-immigrant visitor with authorization to remain in the United States until November 23, 2009.

“However, Vassell failed to lawfully depart the United States as required,” said the immigration enforcement agency.

On March 14, 2018, ICE said the Philadelphia Police Department arrested Vassell for the criminal offenses of possession with intent to distribute narcotics, possession of narcotics, carrying a firearm without a license and carrying a firearm in the city of Philadelphia.

ICE said it lodged an immigration detainer with Philadelphia Police Department that same day.

On April 2, 2018, ICE said the Philadelphia prison system released Vassell into the community, “despite the active ICE detainer.”

Later that year, on October 31, the Court of Common Pleas in the County of Philadelphia convicted Vassell of possession with intent to distribute narcotics, possession of narcotics, carrying a firearm without a license, and carrying a firearm in the City of Philadelphia.

Vassell was sentenced him to six months to 23 months incarceration and a period of three years of probation.

ICE said ERO Philadelphia arrested Vassell, and he remains in ICE custody pending immigration proceedings before a US federal immigration judge.

“Unfortunately, this is another example of how Philadelphia policies limiting cooperation with ICE result in significant public safety concerns,” said ERO’s Simona L. Flores-Lund. “ERO deportation officers are committed to enforcing the immigration laws set forth by our legislators.

“Although the City of Philadelphia releases inmates with active ICE detainers back into their community, the women and men of ICE will remain undeterred in its responsibility to find those in violation of immigration law and ultimately have them removed from the country,” she added.

ICE said US federal immigration laws authorize the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue detainers “and provide ICE broad authority to detain removable aliens (immigrants).”