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Haitian Man Arrested for Illegal Entry Despite Holding U.S. Employment Card

Frantzson Jean, detained at Cyril E. King Airport, admitted arriving illegally by boat but had official work authorization and a valid driver's license; he now awaits further court proceedings after magistrate's release order.

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ST. THOMAS — A Haitian national who reportedly admitted to entering the country illegally was arrested at the Cyril E. King Airport and charged with immigration violations.

Customs and Border Protection officers detained Frantzson Jean after he turned up for his Spirit Airlines flight to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on Thursday. His ultimate destination was reportedly Boston, Massachusetts.

After being escorted into secondary inspection, Jean reportedly told CBP officers that he had come to the Virgin Islands by boat in November 2022, landing in St. John from St. Martin, where he had been for approximately six months. He reportedly admitted that he did not enter through an official port of entry, and could not determine whether his trip had been paid for. Jean had reportedly come to St. John with a friend of his, and he did not know whether that friend had paid for them to be smuggled into the United States.

CBP officers noted that Jean was in possession of an Employment Authorization Card, suggesting that he had been in the process of regularizing his status in the United States with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He also carried a valid USVI driver's license.

Jean was nevertheless arrested and charged with illegally entering the United States. He made an appearance before U.S. Magistrate Alan Teague on May 1, who ordered that he be released on his own recognizance. A public defender has been appointed to represent Jean as his matter moves through the courts.