

The Virgin Islands Consortium

British Virgin Islands Man Pleads Guilty To Alien Smuggling

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ST. THOMAS -- Ashemba Frett, 22, of Tortola, British Virgin Islands, pleaded guilty today in District Court to encouraging and inducing aliens to illegally enter the United States, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced.

According to the plea agreement, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) conducted a safety stop on a vessel in Jersey Bay, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The vessel was operated by an unidentified individual. The USCG saw Mr. Frett jump into the water and retrieved him. A Haitian national and a national from the Dominican Republic were aboard the vessel.

Mr. Frett admitted the Dominican Republic national paid him \$700 to travel to St. Thomas from Tortola and that Mr. Frett knew that he did not possess proper documents to lawfully enter the United States. He faces a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. A sentencing date has been set for July 7, 2016. District Judge Curtis V. Gomez continued Frett on pre-trial release pending sentencing.

The case was investigated by the USSG, U.S. Border and Custom Patrol Protection, (CBP), Office of Air and Marine (AMO), U.S. Immigration and Customs and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Sigrid M. Tejo-Sprotte.

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