

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Puerto Rico Man Pleads Guilty to Alien Smuggling

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ST. THOMAS -- Angel De Jesus Marrero, 31, of Puerto Rico today pleaded guilty in District Court here to encouraging and inducing aliens to illegally enter the United States, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced.

According to the plea agreement filed with the court, on December 22, 2015, Mr. Marrero was solicited by his co-defendant, Rodriguez Ramirez, to assist in the passage of five illegal Brazilian nationals through the St. Thomas airport by checking them in at the airline ticket kiosk. Afterward, he was to ensure that the illegal aliens made it to the appropriate gate to depart St. Thomas for New York. Federal agents, however, thwarted the plan before anyone boarded the aircraft and apprehended the defendants along with the illegal aliens.

Mr. Marrero's sentencing date has been set for September 1, 2016. Rodriguez Ramirez previously pleaded guilty to bribing a Customs officer and is awaiting sentencing on June 16, 2016. He faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The case was investigated by Custom and Border Protection Office of Internal Affairs and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Professional Responsibility. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sigrid Tejo-Sprotte.

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