

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CBP Arrests Stowaway Illegal Immigrant Re-Entering Puerto Rico

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers found on Friday a previously deported illegal immigrant traveling as a stowaway aboard the vessel MV NOCC Atlantic arriving from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, CBP announced Tuesday.

Jose Alberto De la Cruz, 49, appeared Monday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Marshal Morgan, charged with a violation to Title 8, United States Code, Section 1326, for re-entry after previous removal or deportation.

The Shipping company security found Mr. De La Cruz in the pier and transferred custody to CBP.

During inspection, databases revealed a 1996 deportation of Mr. De La Cruz after serving time for Manufacturing, Delivery and Possession of narcotics in Providence, Rhode Island. After an apprehension in 2004 after illegally re-entering Puerto Rico, he was deported again in 2006.

Special Assistant US Attorney Christina Caraballo is in charge of the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Puerto Rico.

If convicted, Mr. De La Cruz faces imprisonment for not more than 10 years, or a fine, or both.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.

CBP says its mission is to facilitate travel while maintaining the highest standards of security for those who live here and for those who come to visit. On a typical day last year, CBP officers processed more than 1 million travelers arriving airports, seaports or border crossings.