

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mexican National Who Was Smuggled Into U.S. Pleads Guilty To Reentry Of Removed Immigrant

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ST. CROIX -- On Monday, February 4, Manuel Alberto Fuentes-Acosta, a citizen of Mexico, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge George Cannon, Jr., to reentry of removed immigrant, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced.

According to court documents, the defendant, a Mexican citizen, presented himself to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) primary inspection at the St. Croix Rohlson Airport on November 9, 2018, while attempting to board an American Airlines flight. The defendant told the CBP officer that he was illegally in the United States, and he was referred to secondary inspection where he repeated that he was in the United States illegally and did not have the requisite visa.

The defendant was arrested. He informed Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents that he entered the United States in 1996 illegally and was deported in 2017 from Laredo, TX. The defendant also stated that he had remained in Mexico and later returned to the United States without inspection. He also told HSI agents that he paid a smuggler \$2,000 to \$3,000 to return to the United States by crossing the river from Mexico to Del Rio, TX in April 2018.

The investigation revealed the defendant was deported on June 1, 2017 from Laredo, TX to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico via foot and the defendant did not obtain consent from the attorney general to re-enter the United States. Fuentes-Acosta faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

A sentencing date has been set for June 5, 2019. The case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry.