

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Vessel Operator From BVI Facing 5 Years in Prison For Failing to Comply With CBP Order to Stop

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ST. THOMAS — A BVI national was arrested on December 28, 2021, in St. Thomas on a criminal charge related to his failure to stop his vessel when ordered to do so by United States Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine (CBP-AMO) agents.

According to court documents, William Malone was operating the vessel in Coral Bay, St. John. CBP-AMO agents activated their blue lights and sirens to stop Malone's vessel, and verbally ordered him to stop the vessel. Malone did not comply. Agents filed several warning rounds and, when Malone did not stop, fired a disabling round into his engine. Malone then turned off the engine, after traveling for a short distance.

Malone is charged with failure to heave to, under 18 U.S.C. §2237(a)(1). If convicted, Malone faces a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

CBP-AMO and Homeland Security Investigations are investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam Sleeper is prosecuting the case.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.