

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Colombian Nationals Facing Illegal Entry Charges Following Attempt to Board Flight With Fake Visas at Cyril E. King Airport

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Jets at the Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — Three Colombian nationals were arrested on December 31 at the Cyril E. King Airport on criminal charges related to their alleged improper entry into the United States and use of fraudulent visas.

According to court documents, Oscar David Mira Aristizabal, 49, Alexander Lopera Castaneda, 31, and Maria Eugenia Alzate Sosa, 29, arrived in St. Thomas by boat from St. Martin on December 27, 2021, without presenting themselves at a port of entry. On

December 30 they presented themselves to Customs and Border Protection for inspection at the Cyril E. King Airport. There, they presented visas that showed signs of alteration and that lacked certain security features. A check of automated databases determined that the individuals had no pending applications for entry documents with Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Mira Aristizabal, Lopera Castaneda, and Alzate Sosa were charged with improper entry, under 8 U.S.C. § 1325(a)(1), and visa fraud, under 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a). If convicted, each individual faces a maximum penalty of 126 months in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors.

Homeland Security Investigations is 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.