

Culebra, Puerto Rico Captain Sentenced For Knowingly Transporting Illegal Immigrants

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ST. THOMAS — Arturo Serrano-Arizmendi, 27, of Culebra, Puerto Rico, was sentenced today after being convicted of knowingly transporting illegal aliens for commercial advantage or private financial gain, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced.

District Court Judge Curtis V. Gomez sentenced Arizmendi to 6 months in prison followed by three years supervised release, and ordered Arizmendi to pay a special assessment of \$100. Gomez also ordered Arizmendi to forfeit \$500 and a 1980 22-foot Maco boat.

According to court documents, on June 7, 2019, Arizmendi captained his Maco boat from St. Thomas in the direction of Culebra with no navigational lights. On board his vessel were five individuals that he knew were illegal aliens: four from Brazil and one from the Dominican

Republic. A Customs and Border Patrol marine unit intercepted the vessel and returned it to St. Thomas where Arizmendi and the illegal aliens were taken into custody by Homeland Security Investigations. When he was questioned, Arizmendi admitted that he received \$100 per person to transport them to Culebra, PR.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Everard E. Potter.

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