

Brazilian man charged with attempting to smuggle people after watercraft rescue

By [Harold McNeil](#) | Published March 14, 2019 | Updated 48 minutes ago

A Brazilian national residing in Toronto has been charged with attempting to smuggle people into the United States for financial gain or commercial advantage, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

If convicted, Wanderson Dos Santos Freitas faces a mandatory minimum of three years in prison and a maximum of 10 years, prosecutors said.

Dos Santos Freitas was among three people spotted by a U.S. Border Patrol agent on a personal watercraft about 50 to 60 feet from the shoreline of Beaver Island State Park on Grand Island.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Dos Santos Freitas attempted to push the watercraft away from the shoreline when the three noticed the agent. The watercraft became stuck in the ice.

Dos Santos Freitas and a passenger, of Brazil, abandoned the watercraft and walked across the ice to shore.

Another passenger, of the Dominican Republic, was rescued by the Grand Island Fire Company.

All three were placed under arrest.

Dos Santos Freitas appeared Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah J. McCarthy, and was detained pending a detention hearing Tuesday.