

Department of Justice

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CANADIAN CITIZENS ADMIT SMUGGLING ATTEMPT

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Canadian citizen Bradley Ruitter, 20, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny to smuggling goods into the United States. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In addition, the defendant's father, Richard Ruitter, 47, also a Canadian citizen, pleaded guilty to refusing to assist a customs officer before Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder. The charge carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell T. Ippolito, Jr., who is handling the case, stated that the defendants attempted to smuggle a motor vehicle, owned by Bradley Ruitter, into the United States. The vehicle, a Mazda Miata, was a right-hand-drive vehicle which does not meet a host of federal motor vehicle safety standards. The defendants planned to sell the car to a prospective buyer from Massachusetts. Bradley Ruitter acknowledged that he switched the license plate on the vehicle in order to conceal the real purpose of the defendants' entry into the United States.

The pleas are the culmination of an investigation on the part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero.

Bradley Ruitter will be sentenced on April 25, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny. Richard Ruitter will be sentenced on April 25, 2012 at 10:15 a.m. before Judge Schroeder.

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