

Letter to the Editor of the *Cayman Net News*, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands (U.K.)

Are Cubans no longer able to claim asylum?

Friday, April 30, 2004

Dear Sir,

I would like to make a few comments on the Cubans who were towed into the Cayman Islands because of engine trouble. They were reportedly on their way to Honduras.

The Chief Immigration Officer on Radio Cayman's morning news said that the CI Government has an agreement with the Cuban government to return any Cubans who land on these shores.

Does that mean that Cubans are no longer able to claim asylum in this British Colony? Does it also mean that we are enforcing Cuban law in the Cayman Islands?

Mr McGuire also said that it would be unwise in the wake of 9/11 to be perceived by the USA to be facilitating migrations of illegal aliens.

Only once before have I heard such rubbish on the local media. The United States allows all Cubans who arrive on its shores to claim asylum, yet we are not allowed to give them a hose clamp and a peanut butter sandwich.

I fear the policies of the Cayman Islands Immigration department have lost all common sense and are also lacking in any feelings of humanity and Christianity.

These people's intent was not to land here and apply for status, they had a maritime emergency and there are laws that govern those sort of events to which Britain is a signatory. There is presently a Cuban Physician here for the past 15 years who is unable to practise until he goes to Jamaica and become certified.

Unfortunately he has no travel documents and has been unable to obtain any from the Cayman Islands Government so he is packing shelves in a local supermarket.

Way to go Cayman. Is it all about US\$?

Victor Look Loy