

FCC sinks alleged PSL pirate radio station

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PORT ST. LUCIE — An alleged illegal Haitian radio station run out of a western Port St. Lucie home was shut down Wednesday night by police and Federal Communications Commission officials, police said Thursday.

The station broadcast on 106.1 FM from a house in the 1500 block of Southwest Nervia Avenue off Rosser Boulevard near the police department's western station, said Officer Robert Vega, police spokesman.

Homeowner Roubens Maignan, 37, reportedly was in charge of the station, living in the home with his wife and children. Police don't know how long the station was running, but the home was bought two years ago, according to the St. Lucie County Property Appraiser's Web site.

It's the first pirate radio station busted in city history, Sgt. Derek Brieske said.

Maignan could not be reached Thursday. He **faces a felony charge of unauthorized transmissions to or interference with a public or commercial radio station licensed by the FCC.** Maignan's son, 19-year-old Jean L. Prophete, was arrested and charged with misdemeanor resisting arrest without violence.

"What next? Radio Free Cuba sets up shop in our backyard?" Brieske said. "Or perhaps Radio Free Moscow?"

The FCC received an anonymous complaint that the station was interfering with a station identified as 107.1 WJFP, Detective Janet Palmer said. The FCC contacted police on Tuesday.

"Once they got a certain location, they drive around the block, and that's where they found the antenna," Palmer said. **"The complainant told them that you can hear the radio station from, I believe it was Martin County to Indian River County."**

The station broadcast predominantly Haitian music and news from Haiti, she said.

A family member told investigators that Maignan is from Haiti. He moved to the United States when he was 11. The family member also said Maignan and his family came to Port St. Lucie from Boston about 18 months ago and that he's a computer programmer.

"He's got a full-time job during the day and he does this part-time at night," Vega said.

Other than the recent arrest, Maignan doesn't have a criminal history in Florida, but is thought to have a robbery charge out of Boston. The disposition of that case was unclear Thursday.

Originally from Haiti, Sony Lorrius, owner and manager of the Septentrion Market in Fort Pierce, said he has heard of the station, but said it wasn't that popular.

"We tried to get it now and then, but it's not that easy," he said. "It wasn't big enough for us to hear it in Fort Pierce."

Palmer said Maignan reportedly bought the equipment in Miami and was told "as long as it wasn't a commercial business and his antenna wasn't over 50 feet ... that it was legal." The antenna was much taller than that.

About \$25,000 worth of equipment was in the home, including a transmitter valued at \$3,000 to \$5,000. Investigators also recovered a 9mm pistol.

In December, the FCC investigated illegal radio stations in Delray Beach and Fort Lauderdale, according to agency records. Seven other illegal Florida stations in Orlando, Tampa or Miami were investigated in 2006.

In July 2005, the state shut down a pirate station in Fort Lauderdale and arrested two men. The same month, it shut down a second station in Jacksonville.

Brieske said some pirate radio stations are operated by gangs, catering to the gang community and "criminal entities." He didn't know if that was the case with this station.

Maignan was released Thursday on \$2,500 bail from the St. Lucie County jail, while his son was released on \$500 bail.