Jet Stowaway With Beach Wanderlust Is Free To Roam Again

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Body

A Canadian teen-ager whose beach wanderlust led him to escape from U.S. police, stow away on jetliners and **_hoodwink_** Australian immigration officials was **_free_** to roam again this weekend.

Judge Michael Hubbard told the 17-year-old in juvenile court Thursday that "you have shown a considerable amount of initiative. It's not initiative that I commend you for. Nevertheless, it is initiative."

Hubbard then dismissed the only pending charge against the youth _ for breaking his probation on an earlier offense _ and wished him good luck.

The judge said there was little point in putting the youth back on probation because he would probably just break it again.

The youth's name was not released by the court because he is a juvenile.

Earlier this month he was identified by officials in Australia as Steve Strobde.

He left his Victoria foster home last April 5 and went to San Diego, where he was arrested and put on a plane home. But he got off the plane in Seattle and hitchhiked to Los Angeles.

From there, he said he stowed away on a flight to Athens and returned to southern California two days later. Authorities have not verified that leg of his journey.

But it is known that he stowed away on a flight to Honolulu, where he was arrested and detained for six weeks. He escaped from a detention home in Honolulu and stowed away on a flight to Sydney, Australia earlier this month.

Although he had no money, no passport and no identification, he talked his way through Australian customs and went to a Sydney beach. According to Australian officials, he intended to stow away on another flight _ bound for Athens and the Greek beaches _ but was arrested when he took a cab back to the airport and could not pay the fare.

He told Australian immigration officials he was a 14-year-old American orphan named David Smith, and they subsequently insisted the United States take custody of him. U.S. officials in Sydney refused, pending an identification check.

When his identity was discovered, he was returned to Canada.

Outside the court, the youth said he does not know where he will go next.

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