

## **96 Chinese Held as Illegal Aliens**

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### **Body**

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In the largest seizure of **illegal aliens** on record here, **96 Chinese** were arrested on Monday when they tried to sneak into Honolulu Harbor aboard a Taiwanese fishing boat, the Immigration and Naturalization Service said.

The boat was boarded by the authorities after she had approached the harbor early in the morning without permission to enter.

The crew had apparently intended to bring the boat just close enough to the dock for the passengers to jump off and run, said Donald Radcliffe, district director of the immigration service.

#### **'Mother Ship' Is Suspected**

The **96** passengers, all but two of them men, were charged with trying to enter the United States illegally. They and the nine members of the Taiwanese crew, who are also being **held**, face the possibility of conspiracy charges, the authorities said.

Some passengers said they boarded the boat, the Yun Fong Seong, three weeks ago near Singapore, and others said they had boarded in China.

But Mr. Radcliffe said the passengers might have boarded the vessel, which was designed to hold only 20 people, from a large freighter in the last few days. The men were clean-shaven and all were wearing clean clothes, he noted, while the boat was filthy. The authorities are looking into whether the passengers had transferred from "mother ships."

"I believe it's an organized smuggling operation," Mr. Radcliffe said. "They're paying a professional smuggler -- or relatives and friends in the United States are paying that smuggler -- to get them into the United States by any means possible."

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96 Chinese Held as Illegal Aliens

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