

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Threatens Ex-Wife with Live Bullet in St. Croix Bar Incident

A Night of Fear: Bullet Pulled in Bar Dispute

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Mugshot of Dario Castro. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A man is facing felony domestic violence charges after his ex-wife and daughter told police they saw him pull a live round out of his pocket and threaten his former spouse with it.

According to court documents, at around 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, police were dispatched to a bar at Peter's Rest after a concerned citizen reported a disturbance. They met a Spanish-speaking woman there, accompanied by her two adult children. Her son told

police that his mother wanted to report Dario Castro, their father, for threatening her. The woman's daughter helped to translate as they all recounted what had transpired about an hour earlier.

The woman said she was working at the bar when around 1:30 a.m. her ex-husband approached her and told her that he would allow her to be happy "until later", according to documents presented in court. He reportedly responded vaguely when she asked him to clarify.

About an hour later, the woman left the premises to get some bottles of juice. When she stepped back inside, she told police that she saw Castro standing by the bar. Immediately thereafter, a patron notified her that enforcement officers from the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs were outside. She went out again, and the officers told her that she needed to close up for the night, and she went back inside to start the closing process.

While dispersing the crowd and getting ready to shut down operations, the woman said that she and Castro began to argue. During the verbal spat, he reportedly dug a bullet out of his pants pocket and pushed it towards her. "This one is for you tonight," is what the woman told the police he said. Her daughter grabbed the bullet and threw it in the garbage, but the woman said she fished it out and immediately called the police.

This was not his first threat to kill her, the woman told the officers, also disclosing his numerous orders to leave the residence they co-own and both currently reside in. She also told them that Castro does not have a valid firearms license.

The woman's daughter backed up her mother's story, telling police that her mother accused her ex-husband of calling the authorities to close the bar down, and that her father again told her mother to get out of the house. She refused, after which he menaced her with the bullet. "You're going to get the rest later," Castro's daughter reported him as saying to her mother. She told police that the pair had been divorced for about a year, but they still reside in the same house, and constantly argue about that fact. Their daughter told officers that she worried about her mother's safety.

Police also spoke to the son, who said that he was outside and thus did not see the entire incident. When he came inside, he found his mother going through the garbage bin, from which she retrieved a silver and gold 9mm bullet. He took the ammunition from his mother and kept it until the police arrived. Like his sister, the son also told police that Castro does not own a firearm license. He further disclosed that he had seen his father with a 9mm handgun several months ago, but that he did not know where it was, and suggested that Castro had hidden it.

Police then went to the surveillance footage, which captured the scene much as the woman and her two children described it. Officers reportedly spotted Castro with the bullet in his outstretched hand, trying to walk towards his ex-wife while his daughter pushed him back. Eventually his former spouse stepped forward and extended her hand as if to accept the bullet, but their daughter snatched it from her father's hand and lobbed it into the garbage bin behind the bar. The footage also showed the woman retrieving the bullet from the bin.

Officers tracked down Castro to Fredensborg shortly after, where he denied trying to hand his ex-wife a live bullet. He admitted that he did not have a valid firearm license, a fact that was later verified by a check with the Firearms Bureau.

Castro was arrested and charged with possession or sale of ammunition, and disturbing the peace as an act of domestic violence. As he was being booked, police report that he admitted to removing the bullet from his pants pocket to throw it in the bin. He denied saying anything to his ex-wife while he was at the bar.

Castro was remanded into custody until his court appearance on Monday before Magistrate Ernest Morris, who found probable cause to uphold both charges. Bail was set at \$15,000, of which Castro must pay 10% plus \$1 to secure his release ahead of trial, with an unsecured bond for the remainder. Additional release conditions have not been disclosed by the court.

Castro's next hearing on the matter is scheduled for November 15.