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Two Arrested in VIPD's "Operation Top Shottas" for Shooting and Assault on St. Croix

Illegal firearms and drugs seized in VIPD raid, suspects charged with attempted murder

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From left to right, mugshots of Jose A. Quinones and Randy H. Morales. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — In a significant law enforcement operation named "Operation Top Shottas," the V.I. Police Department announced Wednesday that it successfully apprehended two individuals, Jose A. Quinones and Randy H. Morales, for their involvement in a series of violent incidents in St. Croix.

According to the release, the initial incident occurred on October 8, 2023, when the 911 Emergency Call Center received reports of shots being fired at Midland Road near Marvelous Auto Body. Responding officers were informed by victims that shots had been fired at them from a moving vehicle, which resulted in the disabling of their vehicle. Further investigation by the Criminal Investigation Bureau identified Morales and Mr. Quinones as the assailants.

On October 18, 2023, a related incident unfolded when Quinones was spotted driving a vehicle in the Estate Profit area. Upon attempting to approach the vehicle, the VIPD's Special Operations Unit was met with gunfire from the occupants, who then fled the scene at high speed. Investigations later confirmed that Quinones was among those who discharged shots at the officers.

In January 2024, following thorough investigations, arrest warrants were issued for both Quinones and Morales. On Wednesday the VIPD executed a search warrant at Quinones's residence as part of Operation "Top Shottas". This operation led to the seizure of multiple illegal firearms, ammunition, and drugs. Quinones, 21, and Morales, 25, were arrested in connection with the arrest warrants and seized contraband.

Both suspects were charged with first-degree attempted murder, first-degree assault, reckless endangerment, third-degree assault, and carrying/using a dangerous weapon.

Following their arrest, they were informed of their Miranda Rights. Unable to post bail set at \$1,050,000 for Quinones and \$500,000 for Morales, both were remanded to the John Bell Correctional Facility.

Their Advice of Rights Hearing is scheduled for January 25 at the V.I. Superior Court, the VIPD said.