

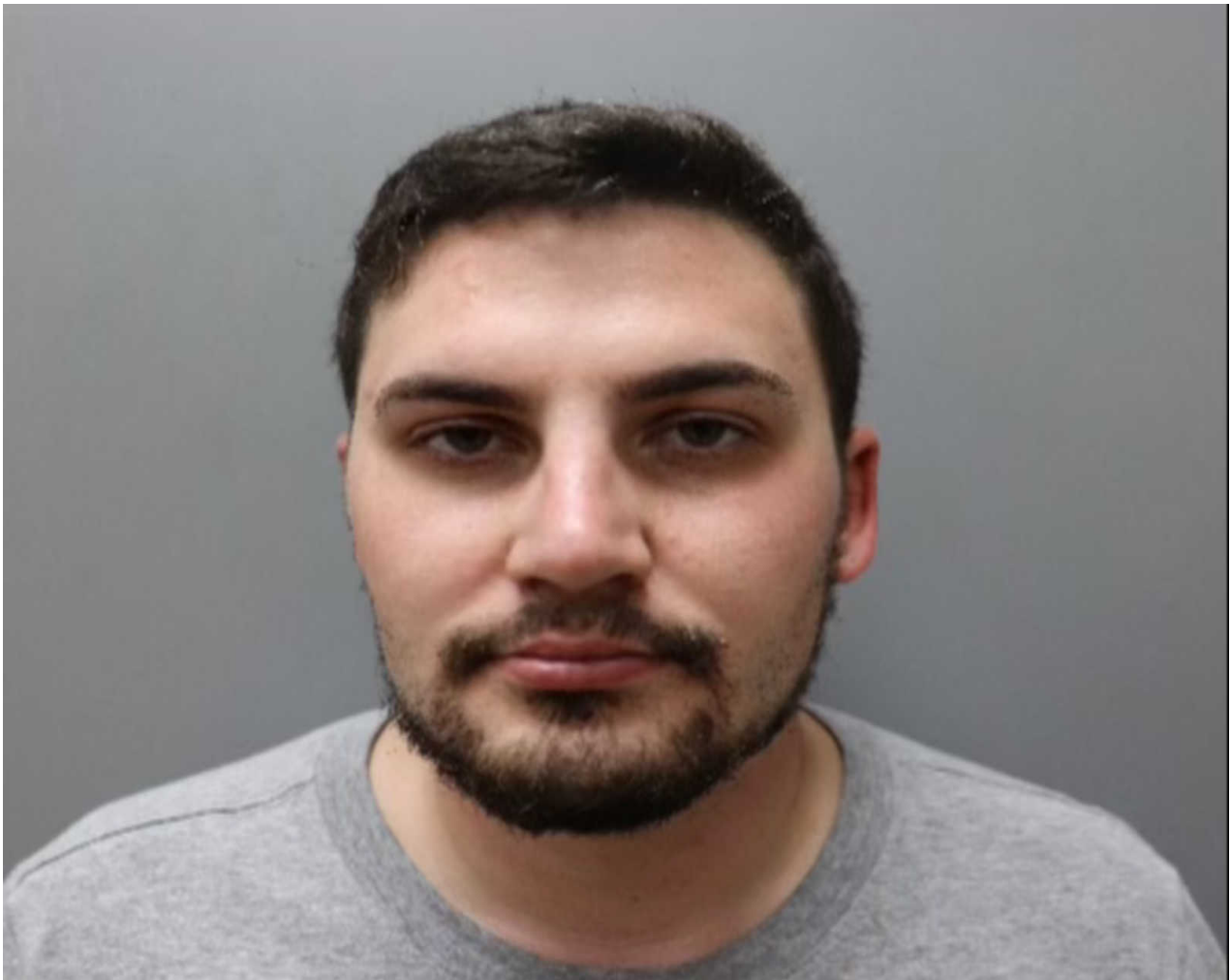
The Virgin Islands Consortium

Charges Against Manuel Fretard Dismissed

Superior Court grants motion to dismiss, exonerates bail, and cancels all future hearings in assault case

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Mugshot of Manuel Fretard. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man who was facing several felony assault charges after reportedly entering a woman's home without permission and assaulting her with a gun has had his case dismissed.

Court documents originally alleged that just before 3:30 a.m. on a Sunday, April 7, a 911 call was made reporting that a woman had been assaulted. The woman's boyfriend, named as Mr. Manny, reportedly had a gun and was flashing it at both his girlfriend and

the neighbor reporting the incident. The neighbor described the girlfriend's injuries to the 911 operators.

Upon arrival, investigating officers found the victim already in an ambulance, receiving treatment from emergency medical technicians. She was subsequently taken to a hospital for treatment, and a search by police for the man, now formally identified as Manuel Fretard, was initially unsuccessful.

Witnesses and investigation revealed that the woman was found by a neighbor, who had been dropped off by a friend. They discovered the front door locked and, while walking around the residence trying to get the attention of one of the housemates, heard yelling from the woman's apartment. They knocked on the door, only to be met with more crying and shouting.

The neighbor ran back to alert the person who had driven them home, and the two friends entered the woman's apartment from the back door. Inside, they found her on the floor, with Fretard walking backward toward the front door. After he turned and left, the neighbor called 911.

Later, the woman recovered enough to recount her story to police, describing how she came home from work on Saturday night and received a call from her ex-boyfriend saying that he was on his way to her house. She told Fretard he was not welcome, but he arrived while she was in the bathroom and entered her apartment uninvited through the back door. The woman described being violently assaulted by Fretard, who allegedly pushed her to the floor, grabbed her head, and hit it against the television stand. She recounted how he put a gun in her mouth, pulled the trigger, hit her in the eye, and squeezed her neck. Fretard left only when her neighbor entered the residence.

Fretard told police a different story, claiming the woman had contacted him and seemed distressed. He denied assaulting her and said he found her in a state of distress, drifting in and out of consciousness. He mentioned throwing unknown pills off the balcony and did not call authorities, believing the woman had a warrant out for her arrest.

Fretard was arrested and charged with multiple offenses, including first, second, and third-degree assault, simple assault and battery, unlawful entry, carrying a dangerous weapon during a crime of violence, and brandishing and exhibiting a firearm. He was remanded into custody but released on \$15,000 bail. He was required to contact the probation office weekly, submit to third-party custody, surrender his driver's license and passport, and seek court permission for travel.

Case Dismissed

On June 28, 2024, the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands Division of St. Thomas and St. John dismissed the charges against Manuel R. Fretard. The order of dismissal, signed by Judge Sigrid M. Tejo, granted the People's motion to dismiss the case without prejudice. The \$15,000 bond posted by Mark Bernier was exonerated and returned to the surety. The court canceled all scheduled conferences and hearings related to the case. Fretard was directed to present himself to retrieve any surrendered identification documents.