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Police Dog Leads to Arrest of Man on Firearm and Ammunition Charges in St. Croix

Police found a .40 caliber Taurus handgun with an obliterated serial number and additional ammunition inside the vehicle

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Mugshot of Tselot Tafari. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A man is facing multiple gun charges in the V.I. Superior Court after a police dog alerted officers to his car during a targeted traffic stop.

According to court documents, police reported spotting a black Nissan Altima on Thursday afternoon that had been linked to an armed robbery incident several months ago. Officers first noticed the vehicle near East Airport Road, noting that it was driving without a front license plate and had an illegal windshield tint. They requested a K9 unit and conducted a traffic stop near the

William D. Roebuck Industrial Park.

Once the vehicle was stopped, a police dog was commanded to search the exterior of the Altima. She reportedly alerted after sniffing the seam between the front passenger door and the handle, indicating the likely presence of a firearm or ammunition inside the vehicle.

After questioning the occupants of the vehicle, who by then had been asked to exit the car, police learned that there was indeed a gun in the vehicle. Tselot Tafari claimed ownership of the weapon and told officers that it was underneath the driver's seat. He also reportedly admitted to not having the necessary license to possess a firearm in the territory.?

Tafari was immediately arrested.

Forensic technicians identified the weapon as a black .40 caliber Taurus handgun, which had a round in the chamber and a magazine containing 16 live rounds. The serial number on the firearm was obliterated. Authorities also found a transparent plastic bag with an additional 30 live .40 caliber rounds on the front passenger floorboard.

Officers took Tafari to the Wilbur H. Francis Command for booking, where he was formally charged with carrying a firearm with evidence of intent to commit a crime of violence, possession of ammunition, alteration of identifying mark on weapons, operating a vehicle with foreign plates, and operating a motor vehicle with tint. He was then remanded into the custody of the Bureau of Corrections to await his advice of rights hearing.?

In court on Friday, Magistrate Yolanda Brow Ross found probable cause to uphold all charges against Tafari. Bail was set at \$50,000, however he was allowed the option of paying \$1000 in cash, with the remainder signed as an unsecured bond. Once released from custody, Tafari will have to abide by a 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew.

His next court appearance is scheduled for July 10.