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Kansas Man Charged with Federal Crimes for Bringing Loaded Gun to USVI

Robert Dean Zoch admitted to bringing the loaded firearm for protection due to reports of shootings in the USVI

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — A Kansas man is facing federal criminal charges after admitting to knowingly traveling to the territory with a loaded firearm and ammunition.

On May 22, Robert Dean Zoch was leaving St. Thomas via the Cyril E. King International Airport, when a Customs and Border Protection dog alerted on a bag belonging to his travel partner.

The luggage of both individuals was then referred for secondary inspection, whereupon CBP officers discovered a Smith & Wesson .38 caliber Airweight revolver in Zoch's checked bag. The weapon was loaded with five rounds of ammunition, and the bag also contained speedloaders with an additional 10 rounds of ammunition.?

Zoch was detained and questioned by law enforcement officials, and reportedly admitted to knowingly bringing the gun along on the trip. He brought it for protection due to reports of shootings in the territory, he told Homeland Security agents, and did not secure it beforehand because he was in a hurry to leave. Zoch also reportedly admitted to not having a federal license for the weapon, not declaring it to the airline, and not declaring it when he landed in the USVI.

He was ultimately charged with two counts of failure to provide written notice of a firearm to a common carrier, and failure to report a firearm purchased outside or brought into the Virgin Islands.

When he was arrested in May, MZoch was released ahead of trial on the signing of a \$15,000 unsecured bond, and restricted to the districts of St. Thomas, USVI and the one covering Topeka, Kansas, where he resides.?

His arraignment is scheduled for July 10.