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VIPD Arrests Four in Connection with Velvet Haze Lounge Homicide; Weapons and Ammunition Recovered

VIPD arrests four suspects in connection with the Velvet Haze Lounge shooting that claimed the life of Micheal Edwards, recovering firearms, ammunition, and related evidence during search warrant executions

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Upper l2r: Kaden Durand, Jamal Ayala, Shantel Torres, and Jared Dover. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — The V.I. Police Department has arrested four individuals in connection with the July 27, 2024, homicide of 25-year-old Micheal Edwards, which occurred near the Velvet Haze Lounge in Christiansted. Officers executed search warrants on September 19, 2024, leading to the

recovery of firearms, ammunition, and other evidence.

According to the VIPD, on the night of the incident, at approximately 12:27 a.m., the VIPD received reports of gunfire and multiple victims near the lounge. Upon arrival, investigators learned that Edwards had succumbed to his injuries, while others were injured in the shooting. The subsequent investigation revealed that suspects Jamar Ayala, 19, Jared Dover, 22, and Kaden Durand, 19, were involved in the shooting, which resulted in Edwards' death.

Ayala and Dover have been charged with Edwards' murder, while Durand—who was also injured during the incident—faces charges related to the illegal possession of a firearm. The case was presented to the Attorney General's office, resulting in the issuance of search and arrest warrants by the Superior Court. Bail was set at \$1 million for both Ayala and Dover, and \$50,000 for Durand.

Search Warrant Executions and Arrests

On September 19, 2024, VIPD's Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Special Operations Bureau (SOB) executed search warrants at the homes of the suspects. During the search of Durand's residence, police seized a semi-automatic handgun with a full automatic converter chip, along with ammunition. Durand and 24-year-old Shantel Torres, who was also present at the residence, were arrested and charged with illegal firearm possession. Their bail was set at \$50,000 each.

At Ayala's residence, officers found a large quantity of ammunition and firearm paraphernalia. He was charged with possession of ammunition, with bail set at \$5,000. Similarly, a high-power rifle and fully loaded magazine were recovered from Dover's home, and he was also charged with possession of ammunition and firearm paraphernalia. His bail was set at \$5,000.

All four suspects—Dover, Ayala, Durand, and Torres—were unable to post bail and have been remanded to the John Bell Correctional Facility. They will remain in custody pending their Advice of Rights hearing.