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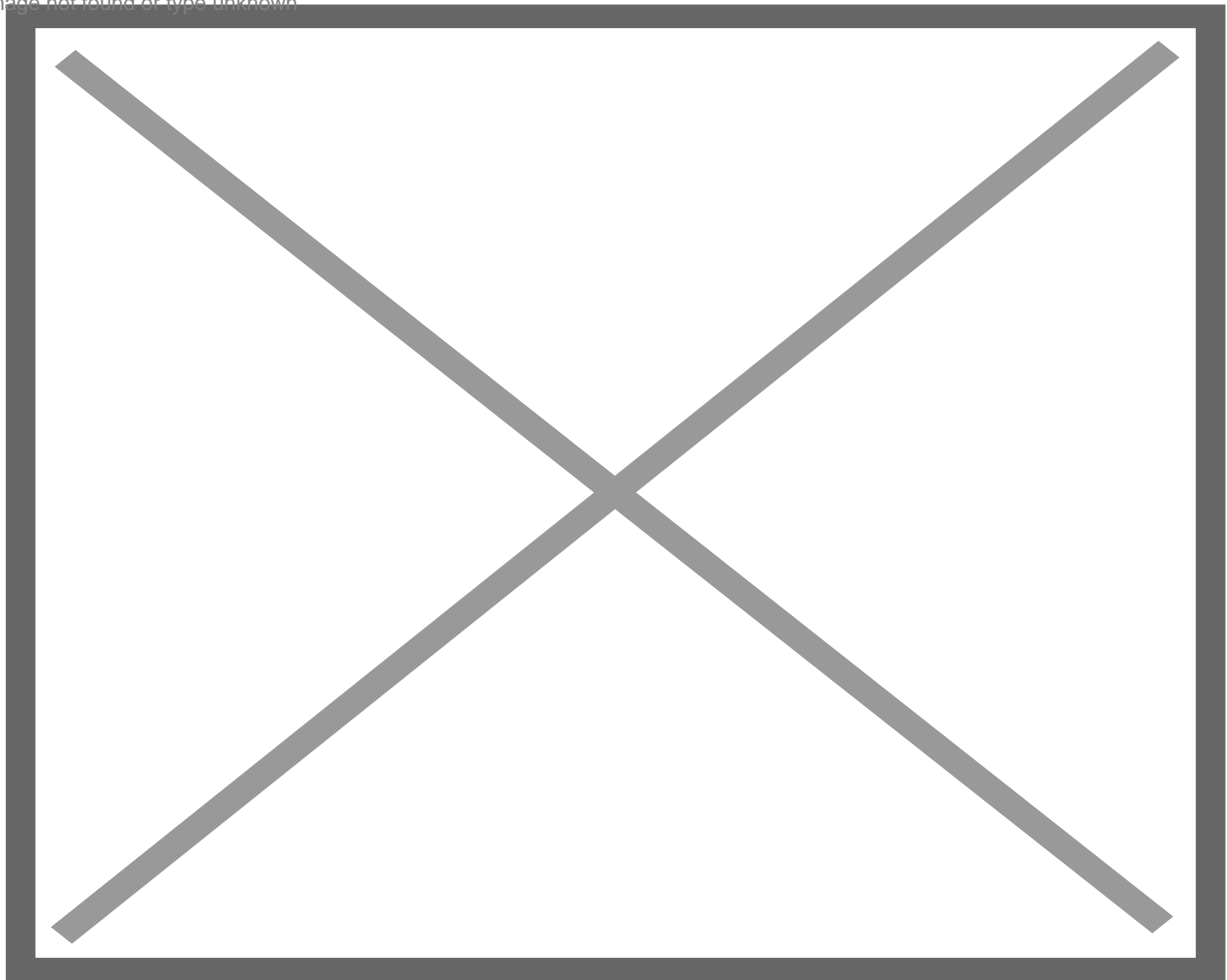
Suspect Strikes Officer and Drives with Police Hanging from Jeep During Frenchtown Chase

The chaos unfolded as the suspect drove recklessly with a police officer hanging from his Jeep, sideswiping vehicles and nearly hitting another officer. The wild chase continued on Veteran's Drive before the suspect finally surrendered

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Janeke Simon **October 01, 2024**

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Mugshot of Lavelle Campbell II, By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man who unsuccessfully attempted a Hollywood-style getaway when approached by police now stands charged with a slew of felony crimes.?

According to court documents, in the wee hours of Saturday morning, two police officers walking through a nightclub parking lot in Frenchtown came across two men, one preparing a marijuana as

if to smoke, and the other holding an alcoholic drink. The officers advised the men to leave the area, an instruction with which they complied.

While the men were walking away, however, police noted a bulge on the right side of the one wearing a white shirt, who was later identified as Lavelle Campbell II. The bulge appeared to officers to be a firearm, and so they approached Campbell and asked him to present a license for the weapon.?

Campbell reportedly ignored the request, instead trying to fit his key into the ignition of the White Jeep Wrangler he had entered. One of the officers had climbed onto the vehicle's step to signal to her colleagues that she needed assistance, when the Wrangler suddenly began to reverse at a high speed, then accelerated towards a nearby McDonald's as the officer clung on to the still-open door for dear life.

Ignoring the screams of other officers to stop, Campbell continued driving, striking another officer with the Jeep's front bumper and almost knocking him to the ground. With the driver still erratically weaving from left to right while the vehicle was in motion, the officer holding on to the Jeep was able to maneuver inside, bracing against Campbell to avoid falling off.

Undeterred, Campbell reportedly continued driving, sideswiping several parked vehicles with the open Wrangler door as he passed near the Frenchtown Ball Park. The officer inside the vehicle says she hit the erratic driver several times with her flashlight, shouting at him to stop the vehicle. In response, Campbell accelerated instead, reportedly continuing to sway the Jeep in an attempt to throw the officer out.

He reportedly sped onto Veterans Drive, traveling west in the eastbound lane, heading towards the former Cancryn Bridge with the officer shouting and pleading for him to stop. Campbell finally complied next to the Western Cemetery, coming to a halt facing west in the eastbound lane. He took a black firearm from the right side of his waistband and gave it to the officer, who removed the keys from the Wrangler's ignition and exited the vehicle.

Telling the shaken police officer that he was dealing with a lot of stress, Campbell reportedly asked if something could be worked out. Another officer caught up to where he had finally stopped, and attempted to arrest him, leading to a brief struggle before he was able to be placed in handcuffs. Despite declining medical attention, Campbell was nevertheless taken to be treated for an abrasion to the face.

The weapon Campbell handed over to police turned out to be a Glock 19 containing a full magazine of 15 9mm rounds. He was ultimately charged with possession or use of a dangerous weapon during a crime or attempted crime of violence, first and third-degree assault, illegal possession of an unlicensed firearm within 1000 feet of a playground, illegal possession of ammunition, aggravated assault and battery of an officer, first degree reckless endangerment, interfering with an officer discharging her duties, disobeying a lawful order, disturbance of the peace, and resisting arrest.

On Monday, Campbell appeared before Magistrate Simone VanHolten-Turnbull, who found probable cause to uphold all the charges against him. Bail was reduced from \$100,000 to \$50,000, which Campbell was allowed to post 10% of the total to secure his release ahead of trial.?

Once released from detention, he will be required to report to the probation office twice a week in person. Campbell must also surrender his driver's license and passport. His next court appearance has been scheduled for October 18.

