

## VIPD Arrests Man for Possession With Intent to Distribute at Tutu Valley Basketball Court

Vaughn McCarty was apprehended after officers found marijuana and a digital scale near him. Under conditional release, he is prohibited from using substances or returning to the basketball court except to play

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The VIPD has not provided a mugshot of Vaughn McCarty. By. GETTY IMAGES

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Police Department has arrested a man for drug offenses after a backpack with several ounces of marijuana was found near where he was sitting.

According to court documents, VIPD officers received information last Friday afternoon that drug transactions were taking place at the Tutu Valley courts. Upon arrival, police saw a man sitting

next to a table underneath a shed at one end of the basketball court. The approaching officer said the man, later identified as Vaughn McCarty, stood up as he approached, and was patted down for officer safety.

On the table, with arms reach of where McCarty was sitting, lay a black and yellow satchel, police say. The bag was partially opened, and the officer could reportedly spot a transparent plastic bag containing a substance that later field-tested positive for marijuana. A digital scale was on the table next to the satchel, the officer said.

A further search of the bag yielded several other bags filled with a substance that tested positive for marijuana, with a total weight of just over 4 ounces. McCarty was then arrested and charged with constructive possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute, and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Monday, Magistrate Paula Norkaitis ordered that Carty be allowed to post 10% of his \$7,500 bail requirement to secure his release ahead of trial. He will now be prohibited from using alcohol or controlled substances, and is not allowed on the Tutu Valley basketball court unless he intends to play the sport.

His next court appearance has been scheduled for December 6.

The legal trade of cannabis and related products falls under a regulatory regime that requires licenses for sales and distribution; the VIPD has expressed on more than one occasion that trade in the substance outside of this regulated environment is still illegal and will be prosecuted by authorities.