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St. Thomas Man Charged With Illegal Firearm Possession After Late-Night Incident at Mandela Circle

Rony Tati Liz, previously charged in 2018, was found incoherent in a vehicle where police discovered a loaded Sig Sauer. He resisted arrest, damaged a police unit, and was later granted release after posting 10% of his \$50,000 bail.

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Mugshot of Rony Tati Liz. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A St. Thomas man's late night mishaps have landed him behind bars, charged for the second time in six years for possession of an unlicensed firearm.

According to court documents, police were dispatched to Mandela Circle just before 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, following reports that the driver of a vehicle may be unresponsive and in need of

assistance. Officers arrived to find a reportedly incoherent Rony Tati Liz inside a grey Toyota RAV-4.

Officers say that he initially ignored several requests to turn off the engine and exit the vehicle, but eventually did so, sitting on a retaining wall next to a nearby fast food restaurant. In response to questioning, Liz reportedly became “increasingly erratic and non-compliant,” according to police reports.

Officers decided to call a tow truck for the SUV, amid Liz's escalating verbal aggression. At some point while waiting for the truck to arrive, after officers had located the now-detained man's drivers license, a flashlight shone into the vehicle reportedly illuminated a handgun “between the windshield and hood of the vehicle,” police say. The weapon was eventually identified as a .40 caliber Sig Sauer P220, with five rounds in the magazine and one chambered.

Officers then attempted to arrest Liz, who reportedly resisted violently, at one point kicking a rear door of a police unit and causing visible damage. Even after being taken to the Richard N. Callwood command police station for booking and processing, Liz reportedly continued to be belligerent, kicking the door to the booking room, refusing to comply with the process, and reportedly attempting to negotiate with the arresting officers “so he could leave.”

Liz was charged with possession of a firearm, possession of illegal ammunition, failure to safely store a firearm, destruction of government property, and disturbance of the peace.

Unable to meet an initial \$50,000 bail requirement, Liz was remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Monday, Magistrate Simone VanHolten-Turnbull did not find probable cause for disturbance of the peace by threats. Probable cause was found for the remaining charges, and the judge ordered that Liz be released from detention ahead of trial after the payment of 10% of his bail requirement. He must subsequently report to the probation office in person twice a week, and is banned from traveling outside the district without the court's written permission. Liz was also ordered to surrender his passport.

The next court appearance for Mr. Liz was scheduled for May 9.