

Search at High School in St. Thomas Leads to Arrest, Gun, and Drug Possession Charges

Khalid Warrell, a student at Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, was arrested Tuesday after school officers found a loaded pistol near a fence and marijuana in his backpack during a random search prompted by a previous on-campus gun incident.

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The Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in St. Thomas, USVI.

ST. THOMAS — A student of the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School was arrested and charged after school officers accused him of trying to throw a gun over the fence.

According to court documents, on Tuesday morning officers on duty at the school were summoned to a classroom to address an incident of non-cooperation and hostile behavior by a

student. On their way upstairs, they said they passed by a student – Khalid Warrell – going the other way. When they reached the classroom, the teacher told them that it was Warrell that needed to be stopped, as he had refused to submit to a search.

The officers went back downstairs to look for Warrell. One turned towards the rear of the building and said that they heard a loud “clink” when rounding the corner. It sounded like an object had been thrown, the police report stated. Warrell was then reportedly spotted with his backpack open. He looked like he was trying to remove items from it. When asked, he reportedly denied throwing anything over the fence.

Warrell reportedly told the officer who found him that he did not want to be searched because he had marijuana in his back. He reportedly tried to walk away at that point but was stopped and guided back to the fence by the police officer, where there was a small chrome pistol on the ground. Warrell repeatedly denied that the gun was his.

During his detention and subsequent search, police did find the marijuana he had mentioned, reportedly divided into several small baggies and stored in a medium-sized glass jar. The firearm was identified as a Phoenix Arms .22LR, with three rounds in the magazine.

School officials told police that a student had been witnessed dropping a pistol the previous week, which prompted Principal Sally Petty to institute a random search of the upper-level classrooms.

The search of Warrell's classroom was being executed that day. After his arrest, and now facing charges of carrying or using a dangerous weapon, disturbing the peace, and simple possession of a controlled substance, Warrell reportedly agreed to speak with Criminal Investigation Bureau detectives.

He told them that he had just completed his first exam of the day and was preparing for his second. His teacher had just distributed exam papers when he saw several school officials pass by the classroom.

The principal then entered his classroom and separated the students by sex, telling them that a search would be conducted. Warrell said he questioned Ms. Petty about the reasons behind the search, ultimately leaving the classroom with his backpack, knowing that he had put a small quantity of marijuana in his bag the night before. He did not want to be caught with it before his exams, he told detectives. The marijuana was not intended to be sold or consumed on school premises, Warrell insisted.

After recounting his version of events that concluded with his arrest, Warrell denied possessing a firearm, or discarding anything at all over the fence. Nonetheless, he was booked, processed, and transferred into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Wednesday, Magistrate Simon VanHoltten-Turnbull found probable cause to uphold all the charges against Mr. Warrell. Bail was set at \$25,000, with a 10% requirement to secure his release ahead of trial. Warrell must, if released from detention, report by phone to the probation office twice weekly, along with the customary restrictions on travel and possession of dangerous weapons.

The next court appearance for Mr. Warrell is scheduled for May 30.