

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Two St. Thomas Men Sentenced to 15 Years for Possessing Firearms as Convicted Felons

Romeo Walter and Kenan Thomas were sentenced to 15 years each after a 2020 police chase and surveillance footage linked them to a cache of loaded weapons, including an AK-47, AR-15, and over 250 rounds of ammo hidden in duffle bags.

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ST. THOMAS — Two St. Thomian men, Romeo Walter, 42, and Kenan Thomas, 38, have each been sentenced to 15 years in prison following a federal jury trial that found them guilty of illegally possessing multiple firearms as convicted felons. The sentencing was handed down by Chief U.S. District Court Judge Robert A. Molloy on May 29, 2025, concluding a case rooted in a 2020 police operation in one of St. Thomas's most high-

profile neighborhoods.

The convictions stem from an incident on April 8, 2020, when officers from the V.I. Police Department were patrolling the Hospital Ground area in response to recent gun violence, including a homicide earlier that same day. When officers approached the Jah Yard section of the neighborhood, a group of men, including Walter and Thomas, fled.

Surveillance footage later confirmed the suspects' movements. Cameras recorded four individuals—Walter, Thomas, and two others—scaling a railing and entering the patio of a nearby home carrying two black bags, according to court documents. During the footage, Thomas can be seen passing a handgun from his waistband to Akeem Julien, a co-defendant, who then placed the weapon into a duffle bag. Thomas was seen departing the patio with two bags, while Julien and Walter left in another direction. A fourth man, Nijontea Walker, exited shortly after.

VIPD officers pursued Thomas to a small house in Jah Yard, where he was arrested. Authorities seized two bags in his possession, which contained a cache of firearms and ammunition: an AK-47 rifle with an obliterated serial number, a Glock 20 10mm, a Glock 21 .45 caliber, and an AR-15 housed in a separate backpack. In total, over 250 rounds of ammunition were confiscated, and each weapon was found loaded. Surveillance footage helped investigators later identify Walter, Julien, and Walker as participants.

Judge Molloy sentenced: Romeo Walter to 71 months in federal prison, followed by 3 years of supervised release, and 15 years for violating territorial firearm laws. Both sentences will run concurrently. Kenan Thomas received 120 months in federal prison, plus 3 years of supervised release, and 15 years for the territorial conviction, also to be served concurrently.

Co-defendants Julien and Walker both pleaded guilty in separate proceedings to firearm possession with obliterated serial numbers. Julien was sentenced to 30 months in prison on November 21, 2024, and Walker received the same sentence on September 19, 2023.

The investigation was led by the VIPD and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), with assistance from Homeland Security Investigations. Prosecutors Kyle Payne and Natasha Baker of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the Virgin Islands handled the case in court.

This prosecution is part of a broader initiative under the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) program, which employs a coordinated, intelligence-led strategy to dismantle major criminal organizations posing threats across the United States. More information about the OCDETF Program is available at justice.gov/OCDETF.