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## St. Croix Woman Sentenced to 30 Months in Federal Prison for Possessing Machine Gun with Obliterated Serial Number

Judge Wilma Lewis delivers stern warning during sentencing of 29-year-old Shabukah Bannis, who was caught with an untraceable machine gun during a VIPD traffic stop, calling such weapons “intolerable” in the community.

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**Mugshot of Shabukah Bannis. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

ST. CROIX — A 29-year-old resident of St. Croix has been sentenced to two and a half years in federal prison after pleading guilty to unlawfully possessing a machine gun, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of the Virgin Islands announced Tuesday.

U.S. District Court Judge Wilma A. Lewis sentenced Shabukah Bannis on Friday, June 20, to 30 months of incarceration in connection with a firearm recovered during a November 30, 2023 traffic stop conducted by the Virgin Islands Police Department.

According to court documents, officers with the VIPD stopped Bannis's vehicle and detected the odor of marijuana. Upon questioning, Bannis admitted that marijuana was inside the car. A subsequent search uncovered marijuana and a loaded machine gun concealed under the driver's seat. The firearm had an obliterated serial number, making it untraceable.

During sentencing, Judge Lewis stressed the severity of the offense and its implications for public safety. She stressed that the court's message must be "loud, clear, and unmistakable—the possession of these types of weapons of war cannot and will not be tolerated in this community."

The case was investigated by the V.I. Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cherrisse R. Woods.

The sentencing is part of the Justice Department's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative, a national effort that brings together law enforcement at all levels with community stakeholders to address gun violence and reduce violent crime.