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Man Charged After Airport Confrontation With Port Authority Police at Cyril E. King

Police say a driver ignored commands, pressed the accelerator while an officer stood in front of the vehicle, and resisted arrest before being charged with assault, reckless endangerment, and other offenses.

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — What began as routine traffic enforcement outside the Cyril E. King Airport escalated into a confrontation Monday afternoon that ended with a man facing multiple criminal charges after police say he ignored commands, attempted to drive toward officers, and resisted arrest.

According to court documents, a Port Authority police officer was conducting traffic enforcement at the airport's front terminal shortly before shift change when he heard a loud screeching noise. The officer looked up and observed a silver 2003 Ford Escape come to a sudden stop near the taxi stand. Police say the driver was "hanging halfway outside the vehicle."

Two Port Authority officers approached the driver, identified as Bryan Schaffer, and requested his documents. He reportedly ignored them. One officer left briefly to retrieve a citation book. As he returned, he observed Mr. Schaffer attempting to get back inside the SUV while the other officer struggled to obtain the requested documents from the uncooperative driver.

The second officer then approached and ordered Mr. Schaffer to turn off the vehicle. Instead, according to police, the driver looked at the two officers — one of whom was positioned in front of the SUV — placed the vehicle in gear, and pressed the accelerator.

The vehicle did not move because it had been placed in neutral, police said.

At that point, one officer drew his taser and again instructed Mr. Schaffer to turn off the engine, place the vehicle in park, and exit. He reportedly ignored those commands as well, prompting officers to reach inside the SUV and shift it into park themselves, according to the report.

When officers attempted to remove Mr. Schaffer from the vehicle, a scuffle ensued as he resisted, according to court documents. Officers were eventually able to place him in handcuffs and transport him to their precinct.

Mr. Schaffer was charged with third-degree assault, reckless driving, reckless endangerment, possessing a dangerous weapon in the commission of a violent crime, driving without a Virgin Islands license, obstructing an officer, and disturbance of the peace.

He was remanded into custody and appeared Tuesday before Magistrate Julie Smith Todman for his advice of rights hearing. The judge found probable cause to uphold all charges except disturbance of the peace by threats. Bail was set at \$25,000, with Mr. Schaffer permitted to post 5% of that amount in cash, and the remainder signed as an unsecured bond.

If released, Mr. Schaffer must report to the probation office twice weekly, with the first visit in person. Magistrate Smith Todman ordered that his expired Tennessee Driver's License be surrendered immediately. He is also prohibited from using controlled substances or possessing dangerous weapons while the matter is pending.

His next court appearance is scheduled for February 27.