

Driver Faces Felony Charges After Crash; Police Say Breath Test Exceeded Three Times Legal Limit

Police said Berson Blanchard showed signs of intoxication, held a partly consumed alcoholic lemonade and registered more than three times the legal limit after a two-vehicle crash; he now faces DUI and two reckless-endangerment charges in court locally.

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ST. THOMAS — A driver involved in a two-vehicle collision on Weymouth Rhymer Highway is facing felony reckless-endangerment and driving-under-the-influence charges after police said a breath test registered more than three times the legal limit.

According to court documents, Berson Blanchard was detained after officers responding to the Sunday evening crash reportedly observed signs of intoxication and found him holding a partly

consumed carton of BeatBox Blueberry Lemonade, a beverage reported to contain more than 11 percent alcohol by volume.

The collision occurred in the Tillett Gardens area.

Responding officers found both vehicles in the westbound lane of Weymouth Rhymer Highway. One was facing west toward Four Winds Plaza, while the other was pointed east toward Holy Family Catholic Church.

Both drivers declined medical attention and provided their documents to police.

Police said Blanchard displayed several common signs of alcohol impairment, including the smell of alcohol on his person, glassy and bloodshot eyes, and slurred speech.

He denied consuming any alcoholic beverages and also denied having diabetes.

Blanchard declined to provide a statement about how the collision occurred and was detained.

At the time, police said he was holding a carton of BeatBox Blueberry Lemonade. Less than half of the beverage remained in the container.

Blanchard refused to perform the three standardized field sobriety tests, according to police.

He nevertheless agreed to submit to a breath-alcohol test, which reportedly returned a reading more than three times the legal limit.

Police said Blanchard made several references to a previous DUI arrest during the encounter.

He was arrested and charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree reckless endangerment and driving under the influence.

According to court records, Blanchard appeared before Magistrate Julie Smith Todman on Tuesday for an advice-of-rights hearing.

The outcome of that proceeding had not been made public as of press time.

An arraignment has been scheduled for August 14, indicating that the court found probable cause to uphold at least one of the charges.