

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Machine Gun-Wielding, Carjacking Suspect Charged In Federal Court

VIC News / **Published On March 19, 2015 10:35 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **March 19, 2015**



James Cruz, [who was arrested on Feb. 21](#) along with a 16-year-old minor for brandishing what appeared to be a machine gun while carjacking a couple sitting in a vehicle in the vicinity of the St. Croix Educational Complex, was arraigned by U.S. Magistrate Judge George W. Cannon Thursday on federal charges of carjacking, using a firearm in a crime of violence, and local charges of robbery in the first degree, assault in the third degree, and unauthorized possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe has announced.

Judge Cannon ordered Cruz detained pending trial.

According to court records, the charges stem from an incident that occurred on Feb. 21 at the St. Croix Educational Complex High School when Cruz and an unnamed juvenile stole a vehicle at gun point. Both persons were apprehended after fleeing from the pursuing police officers.

If convicted, Cruz faces a maximum sentence of life in prison for unauthorized possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, 20 years in prison for first-degree robbery, 15 years behind bars for carjacking, seven years for using a firearm in the commission of a crime of violence, and five years on the charge of third-degree assault.

U.S. Attorney Sharpe reminds the public that an information is a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The case is being investigated by the Virgin Islands Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christian H. Stringer.