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Police Discover Homemade Bomb at Residence of Assault Suspect

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Local and federal law enforcement teams at Jonathan Scribner's Sprat Hall Residence on May 23, 2020.

ST. CROIX — The V.I. Police Department on May 23rd executed an arrest warrant that led to local and federal law enforcement officers defusing a homemade bomb at the residence of Jonathan Scribner. However, the V.I.P.D. only informed the public of the incident — which St. Croix Police Chief Sidney Elskoe said could have been used to cause mass casualty — on Tuesday, June 2.

The police chief said the warrant was in reference to an assault investigation that occurred on November 11, 2019. Mr. Elskoe said when the tactical team entered the suspect's residence, they

discovered a homemade bomb device.

"The V.I.P.D., working with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the FBI, made the device safe and are currently working with the U.S. Attorney's Office on charging Scribner appropriately," the St. Croix district police chief said.

Mr. Elskoe praised the investigators involved for making the discovery "before it could likely be used in a form of mass casualty."



Jonathan Scribner, courtesy VIPD

When the incident was first reported by the VIPD, police spokesman Toby Derima issued a release stating that Mr. Scribner was arrested in connection with a November 2019 assault; the release made no mention of a homemade bomb being defused at Mr. Scribner's home. Asked about the police force's reasoning for withholding the information, Chief Elskoe said, "Because we're working with our federal partners on resolving that situation. There's details that we cannot reveal at this time."

He said the 2019 assault incident and the homemade bomb matter were not connected. It was not clear whether the police force had known about the bomb at the house before executing the assault warrant.

It was also unclear on what basis the V.I.P.D. decided it was now safe to inform the public of the homemade bomb threat, and not on May 23, when the discovery was first made.

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