

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Escapes Golden Grove Prison Two Days After Being Convicted On Firearm Charges In Federal Court

Crime / **Published On March 16, 2018 11:42 AM /**

Staff **March 16, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- After a two-day trial, a federal jury on Tuesday found Nathaniel Thomas, Jr., 28, of St. Croix, guilty of being a felon in possession of a firearm, unlawful possession of a firearm and reckless endangerment, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Thursday.

But Mr. Thomas, who was being held at the Golden Grove Correctional Facility on St. Croix, escaped on Thursday night, V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards confirmed to The Consortium Friday morning. The information was relayed to the commissioner by Bureau of Corrections Director (B.O.C.) Rick Mulgrav.

Mr. Thomas is facing up to 10 years in prison for the felon in possession count of conviction, a mandatory minimum of fifteen years and up to twenty years in prison on the unlawful possession count and up to five years in prison on the reckless endangerment t.



Nathaniel Thomas, Jr.

According to two Golden Grove sources, Mr. Thomas escaped after cutting through a fence. It was unclear as to how he got out of the unit he was being held in.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Mr. Thomas, who had [turned himself](#) in after the V.I.P.D. posted a [wanted notice](#), drove a vehicle into the Gas For Less Service Station on St. Croix in the early morning hours on May 15, 2016. He was followed by individuals in a Ford Explorer. Mr. Thomas stopped his car, came out and hid between nearby vehicles as the Explorer shifted into reverse. At this point shots were being discharged. When the Explorer started to leave the service station, Mr. Thomas chased the Explorer on foot while discharging shots toward the vehicle. He subsequently returned to his own vehicle and left the scene. Individuals in the area ran for cover and hid during the shooting. Over fifty spent shell casings were subsequently recovered from the crime scene, many of which were located on the nearby Queen Mary Highway.

[\[After Gun Battle Near Gas Station, Police Find Marijuana, Firearm, Wrecked Cars, Blood And Shell Casings\]](#)

After the shooting episode, the Explorer collided with two vehicles and came to rest nearby. Bullet holes were discovered in the windshield, on the driver side, and at the rear of the Explorer. Trial testimony established that Thomas was not authorized to possess a firearm and had previously been convicted of a felony offense, according to the evidence presented in court.

According to Mr. Richards, police were dispatched to Golden Grove after receiving notification that Mr. Thomas had escaped on Thursday. He said they would assist B.O.C.'s own response team in searching for the prisoner who, as of this morning, had not been captured.