

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Feds Pile Charges On Nathaniel Thomas Who Is Already Imprisoned. The Latest Is Escape From Custody.

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ST. CROIX -- Nathaniel Thomas, Jr., 29, of St. Croix on Tuesday pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge George Cannon, Jr., to escape from custody, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced. Sentencing is scheduled for July 18.

According to the plea agreement filed with the court on March 13, 2018, the defendant was convicted of federal and local charges, including felon in possession of a firearm, unauthorized possession of a firearm and reckless endangerment in the first degree in the District Court of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix Division.

Upon his conviction, the District Court Judge remanded the defendant into custody pending sentencing. The Marshal Service transported the defendant to the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility, where federal prisoners are detained pursuant to an agreement with the Attorney General of the United States. On March 15, 2018, the defendant escaped from Golden Grove. He was located by law enforcement agents in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico on April 7, 2018 and was taken into custody.

Thomas faces a term of imprisonment of not more than five years and a fine of not more than \$250,000 on his current charges. He is currently serving a twenty-three year federal sentence for his previous federal convictions.

On August 31, 2018, District Court Judge Wilma A. Lewis sentenced [Thomas](#) to eight years imprisonment for possession of a firearm by a felon, fifteen years imprisonment for unauthorized possession of a firearm, and five years imprisonment for reckless endangerment.

[\[Related Story: After Gun Battle Near Gas Station, Police Find Marijuana, Firearm, Wrecked Car And SUV, Blood And Shell Casings\]](#)

The firearm sentences were imposed consecutively and the reckless endangerment sentence was imposed concurrently with the others. Judge Lewis also ordered Thomas to pay a fine of \$2,000 and a special assessment of \$100.

According to the evidence presented during the 2018 trial, Thomas drove a vehicle into the Gas For Less Service Station on St. Croix in the early morning hours of May 15, 2016.

Thomas was followed by individuals in a Ford Explorer. He stopped his car, came out and hid between nearby vehicles as the Explorer reversed direction. At this point shots were being discharged. When the Explorer started to leave the service station, Thomas emerged and chased the Explorer on foot while discharging shots in the direction of the Explorer. He subsequently returned to his vehicle and left the scene. Individuals in the area ran for cover and hid during the shooting. Over fifty spent shell casings were recovered from the crime scene, many of which were on the nearby Queen Mary Highway. The Explorer collided with two vehicles and came to rest nearby. Bullet holes were discovered in the windshield, on the driver and passenger sides, and at the rear of the Explorer. Thomas was not authorized to possess a firearm and had previously been convicted of a felony offense.

The latest case was investigated by the United States Marshal Service. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry.