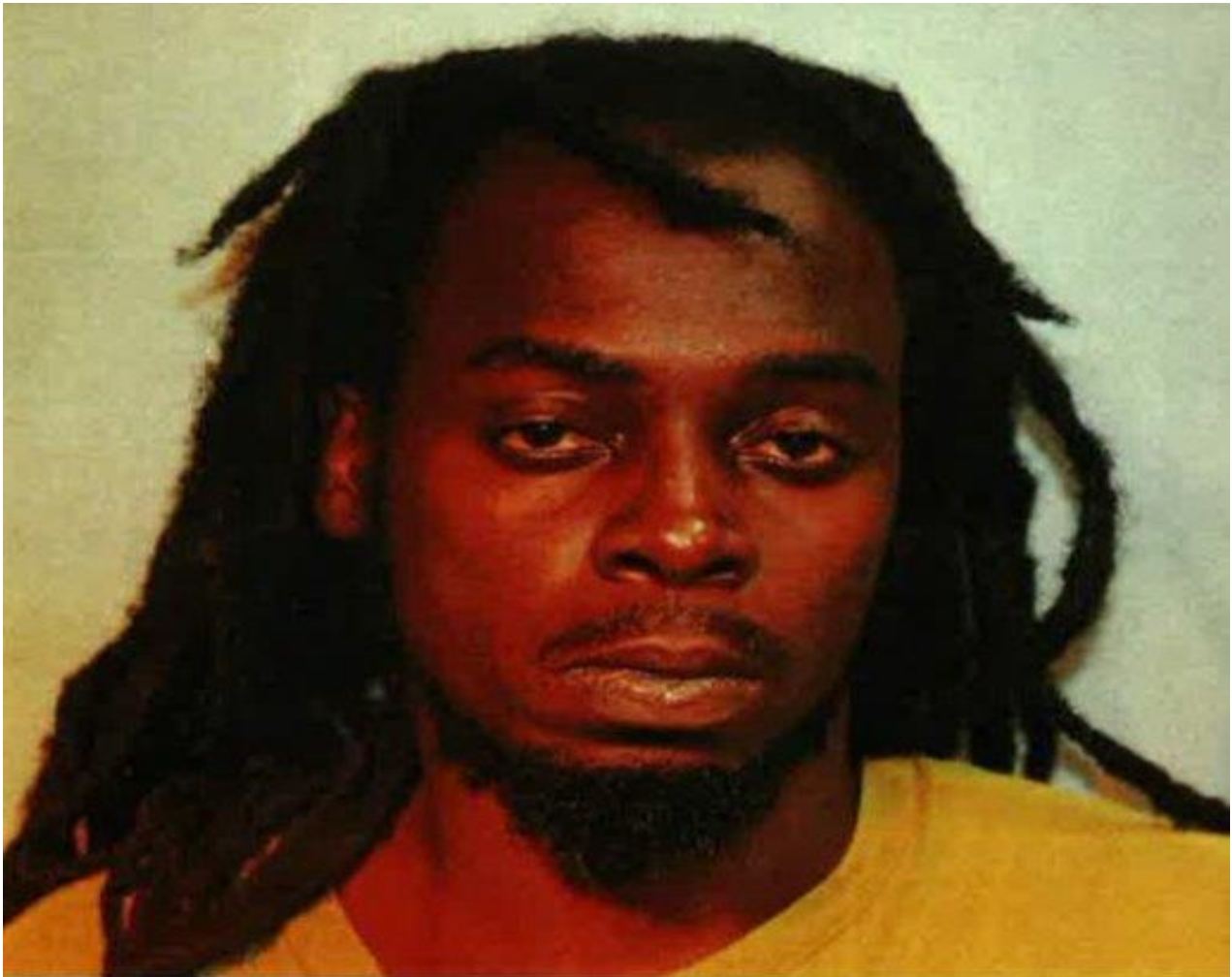


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Jury Convicts Man On Guns, Ammo Charges

Crime / **Published On August 23, 2019 05:50 AM /**

Staff **August 23, 2019**



ST. CROIX -- Quanza Heath, an Estate Hannah's Rest resident, has been convicted on numerous illegal guns and ammunition charges, the V.I. Department of Justice has announced.

A jury unanimously declared Mr. Heath, 29, guilty of all 11 charges he faced – five counts of unauthorized possession of a firearm, five counts of possession or sale of ammunition and one count of failure to report firearms brought into the territory – stemming from a Virgin Islands police initiative conducted almost four years ago.

“These arrests and convictions of illegal firearm offenders are very impactful as a strong deterrent to gun violence in this territory. The successful prosecutions of gun violence for

the safety of our community are among the top priorities of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice," said V.I. Attorney General Denise George.

At trial, V.I. D.O.J. Assistant Attorney General (AAG), Eric Chancellor, relied on the testimony of a cooperating witness and other evidence to prove the case against Mr. Heath, the justice department said.

In his closing arguments, Mr. Chancellor reminded jurors of one of DOJ's principal missions.

"We have an interest in this case," Mr. Chancellor said. "Our interest is to enforce justice, to ensure the safety of our citizens and to ensure that our residents are free from crime and oppression. That's our mission; that's our interest."

Mr. Heath, who was being held without bail for violating his release conditions in a previous weapons case, was remanded into custody of the Bureau of Corrections immediately after the jury announced its verdict. V.I. Superior Court Judge Robert Malloy has scheduled Heath's sentencing for Dec. 12, D.O.J. said.

Police arrested Mr. Heath on Dec. 19, 2015, during an initiative dubbed, "Operation Curfew," which targeted persons who were placed under house arrest as part of their bail-imposed conditions, according to a probable cause fact sheet prepared by Officer Kai Joseph.

According to the justice department, a team comprising officers from the Virgin Islands Police Department's Criminal Investigation Unit and V.I. Superior Court marshals arrived at Mr. Heath's home at approximately 10 p.m. on Dec. 19, 2015. At the time, a V.I. Superior Court judge had ordered that Mr. Heath be kept under 24-hour house arrest as a term of his bail. Officers knocked several times on the front door and when no one answered, a check was conducted of the perimeter of the house in order to locate Mr. Heath. At the back of the residence, the team stumbled upon a large number of a green leafy plant – suspected to be marijuana – under a fluorescent light, according to Officer Joseph.

The team later made contact with Mr. Heath, who was inside the house. When asked about the marijuana plants at the rear of the house, Mr. Heath admitted that they were his. The team then set about to search inside the home and found several firearms beneath a mattress inside Mr. Heath's bedroom, as well as more than 100 rounds of ammunition. A firearms check revealed that Mr. Heath was not licensed to possess or carry a firearm. He also served three years in prison for possession of an unlicensed firearm after pleading guilty to the charge on Nov. 13, 2011, court records show.

Mr. Heath now faces a minimum of 15 years on each weapons conviction, up to seven years on each ammunition count and up to three years for failure to register.