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Buck Island Brawl: Feds Take Man Into Custody, Levies Multiple Charges; Five Cellphones, Firearm Recovered From Vessel; Plaskett Condemns Incident

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Buck Island, St. Croix By. DREAMSTIME

ST. CROIX — A man who operated a vessel from which gunshots were fired on Buck Island Sunday afternoon has been levied multiple federal charges, according to a release issued by the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) Tuesday.

Aneudis Acevedo, 33, of St. Croix, appeared before Magistrate Judge George W. Cannon, Jr., for an initial appearance after his arrest by National Park Service Rangers on the charges of interfering with agency functions, violating a lawful order, disorderly conduct, and resisting or impeding an officer of the United States, announced the USAO.

According to court documents, in the late afternoon of January 10, shots were fired on Buck Island after a fight occurred on the beach. Immediately after the shots were fired, Acevedo fled the scene in his boat at a high rate of speed while carrying several passengers. He fled from a National Park Service boat, disobeying multiple orders directing him to stop. Ultimately, the United States Coast Guard assisted and took Acevedo into custody. However, at that point the boat passengers were no longer on the boat. A subsequent search of Acevedo's boat yielded a loaded firearm, a small amount of marijuana, and five cell phones, according to the USAO.

The investigation in this matter is ongoing and is being conducted by the National Park Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the FBI. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel H. Huston is prosecuting the case.

United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert reminded the public that a criminal complaint is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The Consortium [first reported on the incident early Monday](#), which was followed by a statement from the V.I. National Parks, an arm of the National Park Service. According to Reginald Tiller, V.I. National Parks acting superintendent, the gun was recovered from the vessel from which a gunshot was fired. Law enforcement were investigating whether the shot fired was after individuals involved in the fight, or in the air. Additionally, investigators were seeking to determine who on the boat fired the weapon, Mr. Tiller said.

The fight and gunshots may lead to stricter enforcement of Buck Island rules [already in place](#), though the Park Service did not mention any restrictive action in its Monday afternoon release. Mr. Tiller told the Consortium that a meeting was being organized with Governor Albert Bryan and Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, as well as the National Park Service's regional office in Atlanta.

"We will come up with some measures to try to find additional support for our Rangers to be able to better patrol what's happening out there," Mr. Tiller said. "I think what we have a sense of is that because places have been closing early [due to Covid-19], folks are looking for other outlets and Buck Island has become that."

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett condemned the violence on Tuesday, issuing the following statement. "I am disturbed and gravely concerned about the disorderly and violent behavior that has been seen in a number of instances at the Buck Island National Park. This past weekend's incident is an example of increasing problems on our beloved Buck Island. These careless and irresponsible acts of violence committed by a few have the potential to endanger the rights and privileges of our entire community. Buck Island is federal property and its isolation inhibits easy access to support for those injured.

"Our free and uninhibited access as Virgin Islanders to the Buck Island National Park is a right that many individuals in the Virgin Islands generally, and on St. Croix particularly, have fought long for and our office has maintained pressure and done much hard work to keep that birthright.

"The lack of concern for families, individuals, and especially children by the behavior of a few on Buck Island is disappointing and the violence seen recently is appalling and dishonors the work that we have done to ensure that this national treasure remains our local treasure; and not just for us today but for the generations that will come after us.

"This week, I and my team will be meeting with Governor Bryan, our federal partners and local law-enforcement about ways to ensure the safety of Virgin Islanders and our visitors at Buck Island. Our office will not tolerate a few people destroying the opportunity and access that we have to enjoy the jewel that is the Buck Island National Park."

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