

Federal Sting Operation in St. Thomas Leads to Foot Chase, Confiscation of \$800,000 and Machine Gun; Suspect Sentenced to 21 Months in Prison

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John Burgos was sentenced to 21 months in prison and two years of supervised release for possessing a machine gun in violation of federal law, announced Gretchen C.F. Shappert on Thursday, the U.S. Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands. The defendant was also ordered to forfeit the weapon and all interest in the nearly \$800,000 that was seized on the day of his arrest.

According to court documents, on February 21, 2020, federal agents acting in an undercover capacity made numerous phone calls to an individual later identified as John Burgos. The purpose of the calls was to negotiate the transfer of money proceeds of suspected drug trafficking, in the amount of almost \$800,000. On February 24th, federal agents met up with the defendant Burgos at

a predetermined location on St. Thomas. The defendant was completing the monetary transaction when he saw the agents and fled. A lengthy foot chase ensued, and the defendant was arrested by federal agents in the Estate Tutu area of St. Thomas.

Agents recovered a 30-round extended magazine in Burgos' pocket. Nearby, under a vehicle, agents recovered a loaded Glock pistol equipped with an "auto sear," a conversion device that renders a pistol fully automatic (i.e., a machinegun). Agents seized the money, the ammunition, and the firearm equipped with the auto sear. Following his arrest, the defendant admitted he possessed the Glock automatic machine gun and ammunition.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and Homeland Security Investigations. It was prosecuted by the Assistant United States Attorneys Kyle Payne and Nathan Brooks.

U.S. Attorney Shappert noted that proceeds of criminal activity administratively forfeited by federal law enforcement are routinely directed to local law enforcement agencies, such as VIPD, for use in their law enforcement work.