

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Found With Firearm at Hospital While Receiving Treatment Facing 55 Years in Prison

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Amanie Mathurin **January 07, 2022**



The Schneider Regional Medical Center. A mugshot of the suspect was not provided.

ST. THOMAS — A convicted felon may be facing additional jail time after he was found carrying a stolen firearm.

Ahmaud Rodriguez, age 27 is facing a series of charges after medical personnel at the Schneider Regional Medical Center discovered a firearm in a concealed holster tucked into his waistband. According to the probable cause fact sheet, the discovery was made while staff attended to Rodriguez at the emergency department on December 30th. The fact sheet did not detail the nature of his medical needs at the time.

Upon finding the weapon, the attending physician removed it from Rodriguez's person and contacted security personnel to secure it. Police were alerted to the incident the following day and subsequent investigations revealed that Rodriguez was previously charged with [federal crimes](#). A license check at the firearms bureau further revealed that he had no license to own or carry a concealed weapon in the Virgin Islands.

In October 2020, Rodriguez, 25 at the time, was sentenced on his conviction of transporting an illegal alien.

Rodriguez was discharged from hospital on December 31st and apprehended by officers in the Smith Bay area later that same day. On January 1st, a record check of the Glock model 19 9mm handgun revealed that it had been reported stolen in April 2015 from Hillsborough County, Florida.

Rodriguez was consequently charged with possession of stolen property in addition to possession of an unlicensed firearm and possession of ammunition. The medical center where he was found carrying the weapon is within the vicinity of the Lockhart Elementary School and he was therefore also charged with possession of a firearm within 1000 feet of a school. The offense is punishable by a mandatory minimum of 40 years imprisonment. Moreover, due to his previous conviction, Rodriguez is charged for being a felon in possession of a firearm which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years.

The possible jail time he faces if convicted was explained to Rodriguez at an advisement hearing on Monday. At that hearing, Assistant V. I. Attorney General Brenda Scales told the court that Rodriguez was arrested in 2019 for bringing in and harboring aliens, a felony. He was later sentenced to 6 months home confinement and 4 years of supervised probation scheduled to end in 2024. As a condition of his probation, Rodriguez is prohibited from possessing a firearm. Scales noted that despite this, he was found with one on his person, at a hospital nonetheless. Based on these circumstances, Scales described the defendant as a danger to the community. He is also considered a flight risk because of the length of time he may face if convicted. As such, Scales requested that bail be set at \$75,000 and that the accused be placed on house arrest with electronic monitoring.

Meanwhile, attorney Julie Todman argued that Rodriguez was not a danger to the community or a flight risk. She explained that despite being born in California, the father of four is a lifelong resident of the Virgin Islands. Todman therefore requested that bail remain at \$25,000 as set at the time of his arrest, and that Rodriguez be allowed to post 10 percent. She also asked that in setting the bail the court consider the overcrowding in prisons and the fact that many individuals have tested positive for Covid-19.

After being presented with the arguments from both sides, Judge Paula Norkaitis set bail at \$25,000 with no 10 percent provision. The judge noted with concern that the defendant is on probation for a felony and that he is "an extreme flight risk" due to the severity of the current charges. He will therefore be placed on electronic monitoring and is prohibited from leaving the jurisdiction without prior written consent from the court. His next court hearing has been scheduled for January 21st.