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St. Croix Man Sentenced to 13.6 years in Federal Prison on Firearm, Carjacking Offenses

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Friday that Chriss Cepeda, 25, of St. Croix, appeared before Judge Wilma A. Lewis in the District Court and was sentenced Thursday on federal charges of using a firearm during a violent crime and carjacking.

Judge Lewis sentenced Cepeda to 7 years imprisonment on the using a firearm during a violent crime charge, followed by a consecutive 80-month sentence on the carjacking charge, for a total of 164 months in prison, with credit for time served. In addition, the defendant must serve a term of three years supervised release, pay a \$1000 fine, a \$200 special assessment fee, and restitution to the victims.

According to court documents, in the early morning hours of September 10, 2017, the defendant, along with two co-defendants, broke into a couple's home in Estate Rust Op Twist, on the North Shore of St. Croix, while brandishing a firearm. The defendants physically assaulted the male victim and threatened to kill the couple while demanding money. The defendants forced the couple at gunpoint into the rear seat of their Toyota Tacoma pick-up truck and drove to the location where the male victim had left his wallet. After obtaining the wallet, the defendants fled in the pick-up truck and a Jeep Wrangler. In addition to the vehicles, defendants stole \$200 in currency, two iPhones valued at \$600 each, and an iPad valued at \$200.

The Virgin Islands Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel H. Huston prosecuted the case.

This case is part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide initiative that brings together federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in a community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them.

For more information on the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods, see: <https://www.justice.gov/psn>.

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