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# Man Who Bragged He Would Be Out of Prison by Monday Slapped With \$100,000 Bail With No 10 Percent Provision on Firearm Charge

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**Mugshot of Jose Manuel Avila. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

ST. THOMAS — A man reportedly told police that he would walk out of prison without a problem, after he was arrested for brandishing a gun in a bar.

Jose Manuel Avila was arrested after police responded to a report of a man with a firearm inside a bar at Wimmelskafts Gade. According to court documents, the incident was reported around 11:00 p.m. on Saturday and several individuals claimed that shots had been fired at the location. The suspect was described as a Hispanic male wearing a black hoodie.

When the responding officer arrived, he found that the man later identified as Jose Manuel Avila had already been detained by other officers. One of the arresting officers confirmed that Avila was positively identified by witnesses and that the witnesses had prevented him from leaving until police arrived. Outside the bar, a man fearfully explained to police that Avila had come to the bar to kill him, stating that this was the second attempt.

According to the affidavit, the man alleged that a masked man who he identified as Avila walked into the bar and pointed a gun at him. He told police that he initially sat still in shock while one of his friends grabbed Avila to prevent him from shooting. The individual who intervened later admitted to police that there was an ongoing feud between himself, Avila and his friend. He told law enforcement that upon seeing Avila, he instantly knew that he was looking for his friend and thus told him that they didn't want any trouble. However, he says Avila disregarded his plea and pointed a handgun at his friend, threatening to kill him.

The man recounted that he subsequently held Avila around the neck, grabbing his wrist and pushing it towards the roof. He noted that a single gunshot was fired, hitting the roof of the business. He continued to hold onto Avila until he was disarmed and then until police arrived. According to the men, the weapon was given to another individual who reportedly secured it in the trunk of a vehicle until police reached the scene. The affidavit notes that several other patrons of the bar provided corroborating statements, reporting that Avila walked into the bar and pulled out a gun which was later fired during a physical altercation. The weapon in question was recovered by officers on the scene, along with ammunition.

At the time of his arrest Avila reportedly refused to provide a statement. Instead, the accused grinned while he told officers that he would 'walk out of the prison without a problem on Monday', alleging that he had 'authority in a higher power'. Following his arrest, Avila was detained at the Bureau of Corrections after being unable to post bail. According to the probable cause fact sheet accompanying his arrest, he is charged with a total of 7 offenses including first-degree assault and first-degree reckless endangerment. Other charges include possession of an unlicensed firearm, possession of illegal ammunition and use of a firearm during a crime of violence.

At Monday's advisement hearing the court found the defendant to be a flight risk as well as a danger to the victim and the wider community. Bail was set at \$100,000 cash with no 10 percent provision and the judge noted that the defendant will not be allowed to post property in lieu of cash. If Avila is able to secure his release, he will be subject to electronic monitoring with house arrest.