

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Arrested After Allegedly Attempting to Hide Gun in Police Vehicle

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Mugshot of Umba Delsol. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A 30-year-old man has been arrested on firearm charges after he reportedly attempted to conceal a weapon in the back of a police vehicle.

According to court documents, Umba Delsol was arrested on Wednesday and charged with possession of a firearm, possession of ammunition and possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a private youth center. The latter offence carries a possible mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years and a fine of up to \$30,000.

Delsol's arrest stemmed from an incident where a Vitran bus driver called for 911 assistance after Delsol and his girlfriend allegedly threatened to stab and beat up the driver if she did not let them off the bus. While the probable cause fact sheet states that the driver allowed them to exit after calling for police assistance, it does not give any indication as to why she was initially unwilling.

On arrival, police officers spoke to Delsol's companion who stated that she became angry because the driver wouldn't let her off the bus. However, she affirmed that she was fine once she was allowed to leave. The responding officers then offered to give Delsol and his companion a ride to their home in Anna's Retreat and assisted the woman into the police vehicle with her grocery bags. An officer informed Delsol that he would have to be patted down for safety and would be required to secure his personal bag in the trunk. At that point the officer reportedly observed that Delsol became very agitated and clutched his bag. He then jumped into the back of the police vehicle, reaching into his bag.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, an officer who was positioned behind Delsol observed a black handgun that he was trying to conceal in the backseat of the police vehicle. The officer subsequently yelled "Gun! Gun!" several times to alert the other officers and one of his law enforcement colleagues immediately ran to the other side of the vehicle, instructing Delsol's companion to get out. Both Delsol and the woman were detained without incident. When questioned as to whether he had a license for the weapon, Delsol indicated that he did not. According to the fact sheet he affirmed that the firearm belonged to him and not the woman. The weapon was retrieved from the back seat of the police vehicle along with five 9 mm cartridges underneath a pink bag. Umba Delsol was advised of his rights and placed under arrest with bail set at \$25,000.

When Delsol appeared for his advisement hearing on Friday, Assistant V.I. Attorney General Brenda Scales requested that bail remain as set, recommending that the defendant also be placed on a curfew. She opined that it was very fortunate that the officers are good at deescalating situations, suggesting that the matter could have turned into something very serious.

However, defense attorney Andy Johnson argued that there was no information to indicate that the situation would have turned violent. He asserted that there was no indication that the defendant was trying to use the pistol. Affirming that Delsol was not a flight risk or a danger to society, Johnson contended that there was nothing to justify a \$25,000 bond for an indigent man. Noting that Delsol was unemployed, the attorney requested release on an unsecured bond.

Judge Paula Norkaitis eventually concluded that Delsol will be released on the payment of 10 percent of the \$25,000 bail amount. The defendant has further been ordered to maintain a minimum distance of 25 feet from the bus driver who initially called the police. The judge stressed that this means he shall not enter any bus driven by the woman at any time.