

Man Apprehended in Parking Lot with a 9mm Handgun and Ammunition Pleads Guilty

Crime / **Published On January 17, 2020 05:50 AM /**

Staff Consortium **January 17, 2020**

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ST. THOMAS — Jabari Hodge, 29, of St. Thomas, pled guilty Thursday to being a felon in possession of a firearm in U.S. District Court, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced.

According to court documents, on October 6, 2019 at approximately 1:10 a.m., VIPD officers approached the defendant, who was sitting in the driver's seat of his parked vehicle, with the driver's side door open, in the parking lot of a shopping center in the Red Hook area. The defendant was the only person located in the vehicle. Upon approaching the defendant, one of the officers noticed the smell of marijuana coming from the vehicle. The officer saw what appeared to be a marijuana on the floorboard near the defendant's feet. Another VIPD officer noticed a partially-opened bag with what appeared to be a jar containing marijuana inside. The officers

informed the defendant that they were going to search the vehicle, at which point the defendant stated, "Just take the weed and let me go." The officers proceeded to search the vehicle and located a fully loaded, silver and black 9mm Kel tec handgun with one round in the chamber and seven rounds in the magazine.

Prior to his October 6, 2019 apprehension, the defendant had been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year and was not authorized to possess a firearm under federal law.

Hodge faces a sentence of up to ten years' imprisonment, a three-year term of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. However, should the court determine that the defendant is an armed career criminal, then the defendant will be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment up to life imprisonment.

This case was investigated by the Virgin Islands Police Department in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Juan A. Albino.

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