

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bar Employee Gets Lucky After Gun Malfunctions During Robbery Attempt, Suspect Facing Over Twenty Charges

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Mugshot of Lee Christian. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. JOHN — A man has been arrested on a long list of criminal charges following an attempted robbery.

Lee Christian faces more than twenty charges including attempted robbery, possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, aiding and abetting, assault and reckless endangerment.

According to police, officers were dispatched to a bar in Cruz Bay St. John just after midnight on Tuesday. Employees of the business told police that they had closed the gates and went to put away the money when two masked men entered from the beach. According to one of the workers, one of the suspects put a gun in his face and pulled the trigger twice but the weapon jammed. One of the other staff members then grabbed the gun and wrestled both suspects for it.

The second suspect then ran out of the building and one of the employees followed him while the other two continued to fight the first suspect. They were eventually able to get the gun away from him and pulled his mask off while they held him down. At that point, one of the employees recognized the suspect and asked him what he was doing. The employee reportedly told the intruder that he knew him and his family. The suspect then ran out of the business but returned to ask for his weapon. The men did not return the weapon to him and he exited the business once more.

Police later discovered that the handgun contained a seventeen-round magazine with fifteen 9mm bullets. They also reviewed surveillance footage of the incident which showed the two masked men entering the enclosed bar area. The footage depicted one of the suspects pointing the firearm at the victim and pulling the trigger multiple times. Police noted that based on the video, the weapon appeared to have malfunctioned. Officers also viewed footage of the bar staff engaged in an altercation with the intruders before they were able to retrieve the weapon and secure it. The footage showed the victims releasing suspect one who then fled the business but returned minutes later only to leave again after a brief verbal confrontation.

Police were able to identify suspect one as Lee Christian and a wanted poster was issued. Christian reportedly surrendered himself to police later that day and he was arrested and charged with several offenses.

At the time, bail was set at \$500,000. When he appeared before a judge on Wednesday, he was informed that he would be released upon the posting of 20 percent of the initial bail figure. As a condition of his release, Christian must provide the court with a suitable third-party custodian. If he is able to post bail he will be placed on 24-hour house arrest.

The defendant has been ordered to maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from the bar in question and is prohibited from having any form of contact with the employees who intercepted the robbery attempt.