

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Charged With Attempted Murder After Allegedly Shooting at Police, Running Over Officer's Foot and Attempting to Strike Officer With Honda Accord

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Mugshot of N'Kel Morton. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man appeared before a judge in the V.I. Superior Court on multiple offenses including attempted murder and reckless endangerment.

N'Kel Morton was arrested and charged on October 22 on six counts of first-degree attempted murder, six counts of first-degree assault, six counts of second-degree assault, illegal discharge of a firearm, reckless endangerment in the first degree, possession of ammunition and interfering with officers discharging their duties.

His arrest comes after police conducted a traffic stop of Morton's vehicle because it was tinted.

According to documents before the courts, while on patrol on October 22, officers observed a black Honda Accord traveling east on Nicholas Friday Drive. They observed that the vehicle was tinted and initiated a traffic stop and requested a registration check of the vehicle. The vehicle came to a stop in a poorly lit area on the shoulder of the roadway. The Honda stopped directly in front of the police unit — about 10 feet away. One of the officers exited the police unit and approached the vehicle. The driver rolled both windows down and as he did, the officers smelled marijuana emanating from inside the vehicle.

Police approached the driver's side of the vehicle to make contact with its operator. The smell of marijuana was even more potent and the vehicle's operator, identified as N'Kel Morton, was asked for his driver's license, proof of insurance and registration of the vehicle.

While Morton obtained the documents, police observed that the tint on the windshield was past the AS-1 line. Police asked Morton if he had marijuana in the vehicle and he responded, "nah." He was advised that the vehicle had a strong odor of marijuana emanating from it. Officers then asked Morton to turn off the vehicle but he did not comply. They then asked Morton to step out of the vehicle so that they could conduct a search for illegal narcotics. Again, he did not comply. The officers asked Morton to turn off the vehicle again and this time he replied, "I ain't got nothing in here."

Morton then reached for the gear shift using his right hand and one of the officers told him to take his hands off the gear shift. After being told numerous times to take his hands off the gear shift, Morton did not comply but instead placed the vehicle in drive and accelerated without stopping. The rear driver's side wheel ran over one of the officers' right foot.

The vehicle was traveling at high speed but the officer whose foot the vehicle ran over ignored the pain and proceeded to remove his firearm from its holster, bringing it into a ready position. Shots were heard being fired from the direction of the Honda Accord and concerns were raised over the well-being and safety of the officers or any individuals who were in the area at the time.

The officer aimed and discharged his firearm several times at the Honda in an attempt to disable the vehicle or Morton. The 911 Emergency Call Center was then alerted of the shots fired during the traffic stop. The officers relayed the path that the vehicle took while fleeing the area with the description of Morton and the vehicle he was driving. It was also conveyed that Morton attempted to strike one of the officers with his Honda.

Officers pursued the black Honda, conducting inspection of the Red Hook Ferry Dock, Smith Bay, Coki Point Beach and surrounding areas with negative findings.

While conducting their inspections, it was relayed over police radio feed that the Honda Accord was on Middle Road with no occupants, and that Morton had ditched the vehicle. While conducting further inspections, it was relayed over the radio that Morton was apprehended at his mother's residence.

He was transported to the Criminal Investigations Bureau to be interviewed in relation to the incident. The officers involved in the traffic stop confirmed that the man in custody was the same man in the vehicle who opened fire on the officers. Forensics recovered a magazine from a firearm in the vehicle that Morton was operating.

Morton was then arrested.

In court on Monday, a judge ruled that Morton's \$300,000 bail would need to be fully secured to allow for his release. He would also need an approved third-party custodian.

If released, Morton must abide by a 5:00 p.m.-5:00 a.m. curfew daily. He is barred from leaving the St. Thomas-St. John district without the court's written permission and must report to the office of probation twice a week. He is to remain gainfully employed, and Morton is to have no contact with the alleged victims. He is also prohibited from possessing a firearm, ammunition or dangerous weapon.

Morton's next court appearance is on November 11, 2022.