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Alleged Suspicious Behavior at Gas Station Leads to Arrest of Man on Gun and Ammunition Charges

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Mugshot of Willie Gatewood II. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man appeared before a V.I. Superior Court judge Wednesday on gun-related charges following alleged suspicious behavior at a gas station.

Willie Gatewood II, age 20, was arrested and charged on October 26 for possession of an unlicensed firearm and possession of ammunition.

His arrest comes after police conducted a search of Gatewood following a concerned citizen's statement to police that he was among three men who entered the Racetrack Gas Station and were acting suspiciously.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, officers entered the Racetrack Gas Station, which is also a convenience store, and observed three men walking inside the store who were seen staring at the officers. The three men, dressed in all black clothing, were seen gathering next to each other and speaking softly. A concerned citizen inside the store indicated to one of the officers that the men had been acting suspiciously since they entered the establishment.

Police then asked the men how they were doing and spoke to them briefly before leaving the store. The officers then made a phone call to other command officers requesting their presence as the officers at the store were outnumbered.

By the time the requested officers confirmed that they were in the area, the men had already left the gas station and were walking on 7th Street towards the St. Andrew's Church. The officers then traveled to 6th Street and made contact with the three men.

The men were advised that a concerned citizen had indicated that they were acting suspiciously inside the store. They were also informed that officers observed suspicious behavior and nervousness from the men upon the officers' arrival to the store. The men were then told that they would be frisked for officer safety.

They were asked to walk towards a wall and put their hands up. One of them, later identified as Willie Gatewood II, was hesitant but eventually did as the officers requested.

Gatewood was asked if he had any weapons on his person and he responded, "only a knife." He directed police to the knife and it was removed.

Gatewood was then asked if there were any more weapons on his person and he replied, "no." Gatewood had a black fanny pack across his right shoulder that covered his chest area. While frisking Gatewood, an officer passed his hand along the fanny pack and felt a hard metal object inside. Gatewood was asked to remove the fanny pack and he did. He was asked what was inside the fanny pack and he refused to answer the question. The officer opened the fanny pack and saw a black and silver firearm. Gatewood was asked if he had a license to carry a firearm in the Virgin Islands or anywhere in the United States, and he replied, "no." He was subsequently placed under arrest.

Forensics traveled to the scene and processed the evidence. They found a black and silver 9mm Taurus with one black magazine containing seven rounds of ammunition with one in the chamber.

In court on Wednesday, a judge ruled that Gatewood would be allowed to post 10 percent of his \$25,00 bail to secure his release. He must turn in his New York I.D. but will still be allowed to drive.

While the matter is pending, he is barred from leaving the St. Thomas- St. John district without the court's written permission and must not obtain any other forms of identification. Gatewood is to maintain his employment and must abide by a 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. curfew six days a week, excluding Saturdays. On Saturdays, his curfew hours will be from 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Gatewood was also ordered to stay away from the Racetrack Gas Station near 7th Street. His next court appearance has been scheduled for November 11, 2022.