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ShotSpotter Tech Leads to Arrest of Man; Police Warn Against Celebratory Gunfire

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Mugshot of John Carlos Ventura. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — V.I.P.D. officers on Wednesday arrested a man after the department's ShotSpotter technology detected the discharging of gunshots in Estate Sion Farm.

John Carlos Ventura, age 27, was arrested Wednesday night after admitting to discharging shots while at his residence.

According to the V.I.P.D., on Wednesday at 7:01 p.m. the Special Operations Bureau responded to a 911 transmission of gunshots discharged in the Estate Sion Farm area. While traveling to the location, the responding officers utilized the ShotSpotter application system to pinpoint the exact location of the reported gunshots that were fired and conducted a physical inspection in the area.

Officers made contact with several residents who stated that they heard two gunshots fired and indicated the location on the property.

As officers continued their search on the southern side of the house, they recovered two spent bullet casings. Announcing their presence to any occupants of the house, the officers got no response, however, using their flashlights to look through the clear glass window of a bedroom, the officers observed what appeared to be the black handle of a firearm on a shelf in the closet in plain view. Contact was made with the landlord and tenant of the apartment, and the tenant was advised of the officers' observation, and he gave written consent to search the apartment, according to the V.I.P.D.

Later that night, Ventura was present at the Wilbur Francis Command to make a report of an incident that took place at his residence in Sion Farm in which he stated that he discharged two shots at two male individuals that were in his yard.

He was subsequently placed under arrest for carrying of a firearm openly or concealed, and first-degree reckless endangerment.

Unable to make bail of \$50,000, Ventura was remanded to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advisement hearing.

"This is just the beginning of the V.I.P.D. utilizing technology to aid in law enforcement," stated St. Croix Police Chief Sean Santos. "Those who are caught conducting these acts will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. The V.I.P.D. discourages anyone from taking part in celebratory gunfire in the territory."

The V.I.P.D. is asking the public to report the discharging of gunshots to 911, the VIPD Tipline at (340) 778-4950 or the Chief's office at (340) 778-2211.