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# Excellent Police Work Leads to Arrest of Armed Man Who Attempted to Rob Elderly Woman at Her Home

Crime / **Published On February 06, 2023 06:21 AM /**

Nisha Charles **February 06, 2023**

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**Mugshot of Ray Sanderson Jr. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

**ST. THOMAS** — A man accused of trying to rob an elderly woman appeared in court to face theft and weapons charges.

Police were summoned to a location in the Bovoni Homes area on January 25 to respond to a report of a robbery. When officers arrived at the residence, they met a woman who said that she was watering her plants around 5:30 that morning. Her son had just left the residence, and so she said when she felt someone grab her from behind after she walked back inside, she shrugged it off, thinking it was him.

It wasn't until the person grabbed her again and asked if she knew who he was did she realize that the man was not her son but an intruder. The man demanded gold, money and jewelry, but the woman said she screamed for help and ran out into the road. The masked intruder also ran, towards his vehicle. Because his face was obstructed, the woman told police she was not able to describe him. Apart from being shaken by what had transpired, the woman says she was unhurt. The home invader had not taken anything, either.

Police also spoke to the woman's son, who told them that he initially did not believe his mother's shocking tale until he retrieved the home's security footage, which he replayed for officers through his mobile phone. Police saw a stocky man wearing gloves and a mask, walking from the porch to the stairs several times, wearing a mask "like a hat". Apart from the mask, his face was exposed. The footage captured the sleeve tattoo on the suspect's right arm and what appeared to be a tattoo of roses on his left. As he walked down the steps again and moved towards the side door of the residence, the footage also captured the gun in the man's hand, and the mask which was now in place. He then enters the woman's house through that side door, bumping into the woman.

The woman was seen on the surveillance video running out of the home with the intruder following. He reportedly attempts to pull her back inside, but her screams change his mind and the man is shown running back onto the porch before fleeing the property on foot. The woman is seen on the roadway.

VIPD investigators scoured the area for more surveillance footage of what happened that morning, and found that nearby cameras had captured a gray SUV driving in the neighborhood around 5:24 a.m., passing the elderly woman's residence before coming to a stop. A man waited inside, exiting the vehicle only after the elderly woman's son left the residence. As he walked towards the woman's house, the man wore the mask on his head — like a cap, the footage revealed.

More surveillance video, this time from nearby gas stations, suggested that the suspect may have sought refuge in a scrap metal shop in the vicinity. On February 1, police visited the area and saw a man who fit the description of the suspect seen in the security camera footage, down to the tattoos.

In documents before the court, police allege that when the man noticed their scrutiny, he and another man left the area in a red Suzuki SUV. However, they now had a name - Ray Sanderson Jr.

The next move for detectives was to visit the neighborhood where they believe Sanderson lived. There, they saw a red Suzuki Sidekick leaving a gas station, with Sanderson behind the wheel. He was stopped and searched, and police say they took particular note of the way this keychain and lighter were attached to his pants — in the same way the suspect had attached his keychain and lighter as seen on the surveillance video.

Police say that Sanderson, when informed of that detail, "exhaled deeply and bowed his head" before being arrested and charged with home invasion, first-degree attempted robbery, first-degree assault, unlawful entry and possession of an unlicensed firearm during a commission of a crime.

In court on Friday, a judge ruled that Sanderson would need to fully secure his \$25,000 bail requirement in order to be released to his third-party custodian. Sanderson is barred from leaving the St. Thomas- St. John District without the court's written permission. He must surrender his passport and driver's license. Sanderson is to report to the Office of Probation twice a week and abide by a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew. He cannot enter Bovoni Homes and is to stay at least 100 ft

away from the alleged victim. He is to have no contact, directly or indirectly with the victim or any witnesses. Sanderson is prohibited from using alcohol or any controlled substance as well as possessing a firearm, ammunition or dangerous weapon.

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