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Man Charged With Assault After Allegedly Beating Tradesman With Handgun on the Roadside

Crime / **Published On February 15, 2023 03:13 PM /**

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Mugshot of Ernie Ritter. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — Ernie Ritter was arrested on February 14 after allegedly assaulting another man with a firearm.

On the aforementioned date, police were called to Estate Princess to render assistance to a man who claimed that another man had beaten him with a gun. While they were en route, they got word that the alleged victim had left the scene and was headed towards the Ancilmo Marshall Command police station with the reported perpetrator following in a pickup truck.

Police met the complainant at the station, and stopped the alleged assailant near a food van in the area and escorted him to the station. He was identified as Ernie Ritter.

The complainant said that he had been traveling east on Princess Road when he was stopped by Ritter, who had previously hired him to do repairs on the floors at his property. When Ritter came out of his vehicle, the man said, he was holding a handgun and swinging it at him as he approached.

The victim told police he blocked the first two attempted blows with the weapon but the third struck him on the left side of his neck, and caused the gun's magazine to fall out. The man said Ritter then put up his fists, which is when the victim retreated to his vehicle and left, with Ritter reportedly trailing behind in his truck.

Ritter declined to provide a statement to police, telling them that he preferred to wait for his attorney.

Police observed a reddish mark on the left side of the victim's neck. When police searched Ritter's truck they found a firearm between the driver and passenger seats. There was one bullet in the chamber and 20 in the magazine. Ritter was then arrested and charged with third-degree assault.

While Ritter has a license to carry a firearm in the USVI, the government's attorney asked that he turn over any other firearm that he possesses, to which the judge agreed. He was allowed to post 10 percent of his \$25,000 bail during his Advise of Rights hearing on Wednesday. Ritter is to have no contact with the complainant and must report to the probation office every Tuesday.