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Man Who Collected Bag at Airport Containing 2 Firearms and High-capacity Magazines Identified

Crime / **Published On March 20, 2023 06:27 AM /**

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CBP seized two Zaviar Z-15 Rifles and two .556 high capacity magazines. The firearms were turned over to Homeland Security Investigations for further investigation. Pictured left, Jakel Bell. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT/CBP

ST. THOMAS — An operation at the Cyril E. King Airport has led to the arrest of a male suspect for gun and ammunition-related offenses.

On Thursday March 16, VIPD officers [were told by U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\) agents](#) that there was a bag on an inbound flight that might contain firearms. At the airport, VIPD officers noticed a man at the baggage claim area, speaking on a mobile phone. The man, later identified as Jakel Bell, then removed a black bag from the conveyor belt and exited the area,

bypassing the VIPD kiosk where travelers are supposed to declare any firearms they may have arrived with.

CBP officers then detained Bell and took him back to the Customs and Border Protection area to search the bag he had picked up. According to documents before the court, the black bag contained a green case secured with several padlocks. Inside that case were two disassembled Zaviar Z-15 semi automatic pistols and two 30-round magazines still in their original packaging.

A Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agent assembled the weapons, showing them to be functional and operational. Further investigations revealed that Bell had not even traveled that day, nor was the bag his, as the baggage claim ticket was in the name of someone else. At that point, Bell was arrested and charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm and failure to declare a firearm.

His advice of rights hearing was scheduled for Friday March 17, 2023, however at time of publication no information was available regarding whether he was granted pre-trial release.

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