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St. Thomas Firearms Suspect Faces Additional Charges, Accused of Collaborating with Accomplice

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Mugshot of Jakel Jamel Bell. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — Jakel J. Bell, who was arrested in March on firearms charges, has been hit with new charges after law enforcement officials found evidence that he worked with another man to bring the weapons into the territory.

Bell is already facing charges of firearms possession and failure to report firearms after police observed him picking up a bag from the Cyril E. King Airport that was later found to contain two automatic pistols and 60 rounds of ammunition.

Investigations into the incident continued, and in a new affidavit presented to the court, a detective of the U.S. Marshals Service attested that Bell was instructed by someone else on which bag he

was supposed to be picking up that day.

While undergoing the booking process at the station, police say Bell consented to have his phone accessed by law enforcement. Analysis of the device found text messages reportedly instructing Bell whose name would be on the bag he was to pick up, and the day and time he was to collect it.

The number which sent those messages was traced to one individual in particular, providing enough evidence to suggest that both Bell and his contact could be charged with importation of firearms without a license, aiding and abetting, as well as conspiracy to import firearms without a license.

Bell appeared in court on Friday for his first hearing on the new charges and was assessed bail in the sum of \$75,000, fully secured by cash or property. His arraignment in this matter is scheduled for May 5, with his next court date for the original charges booked for August.