

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Shooting Incident Involving Minors Leads to Attempted Murder Charges on St. Croix

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Mugshot of Juanito Ortiz Jr. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — The residents of the Candido Guadalupe Housing Complex was jolted on April 12 as gunshots rang out, and now a local man is facing charges of first-degree attempted murder in connection with the incident, according to the V.I. Police Department.

Juanito Ortiz Jr., 39, is being held on bail set at \$300,000 having been arrested and charged on May 8 following an investigation by local law enforcement. The additional charges against him include first-degree reckless endangerment.

The 911 Emergency Call Center first received reports of the incident at approximately 9:35 p.m. on April 12. Responding officers arrived swiftly on the scene where they began a preliminary investigation and interviewed victims and witnesses.

Information gathered during the investigation led them to Ortiz, who allegedly fired shots at two minors and an adult within the residential complex. The responding officers were able to secure arrest and search warrants for Ortiz and his residence from the V.I. Superior Court.

Members of the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Special Operations Bureau subsequently executed the warrants at Ortiz's residence. According to Lt. Naomi Joseph, Commander of CIB, Ortiz was detained without any incident.

"He was advised of his Miranda Rights and gave a statement admitting to firing shots in the air on said date," Lt. Joseph reported.

Despite the bail set, Ortiz was unable to post and has since been transferred to the John Bell Correctional Facility. He is now awaiting his Advice of Rights Hearing at the Superior Court. The serious charges against him underscore what is a deep-seated issue of gun violence within the territory.