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Man Arrested After Reportedly Punching Female Patron, Brandishing Firearm

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Mugshot of Victor Cannegieter. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — One man is facing firearms charges after police responded to an incident of shots fired in Coakley Bay.

On Wednesday June 7, just after 11:00 p.m., several concerned citizens called in the report. Responding officers arrived about 25 minutes later and spoke to a resident of Coakley Bay Condominiums. The man told police at around 11:05 p.m., he heard what sounded to him like a burst of automatic rifle fire, followed by what he figured was a car speeding away.

According to the probable caused fact sheet, police fanned out to make a check of the area. One officer reportedly got flagged down at Castaways Bar & Restaurant on St. Croix's east end by

someone who told them that a man was causing a disturbance at the establishment. The man had already assaulted a female customer, police were told. While talking with the witness, the VIPD officer spotted a man, later identified as Victor Cannegieter, who approached the police vehicle and told them that he was looking for his dog. Cannegieter's eyes were red and watery, the police report recounts, and smelled of alcohol. He walked over to a red GMC Envoy and opened the vehicle's rear door, speaking about his missing dog and another animal apparently in the SUV.

The owner of Castaways informed police that during the reported physical altercation, the bartender had wrestled a gun away from Cannegieter. Officers were led to a black .40 caliber Glock 23 handgun and an extended magazine holding about 27 rounds of .40 caliber ammunition. When questioned, Cannegieter told police that he did not own a firearm, however police subsequently found another magazine, this time on the driver's side floor of the Envoy. A closer inspection discovered that the magazine contained several live rounds of ammunition, as well as one spent shell casing.

Police followed a retreating Cannegieter to the side of the road, where he was arrested after being unable to produce a valid license to carry a firearm or ammunition in the territory. When police searched the black backpack he had reportedly been seen placing on the hood of the SUV, they found a third magazine packed with live ammunition and a black sock that reportedly held six live rounds. A closer inspection of the vehicle yielded a glass jar filled with a green leafy substance which ultimately tested positive for marijuana.

The bar owner told police that Cannegieter had been involved in a verbal altercation with another man who was at the establishment. Both men stood up, with Cannegieter reportedly announcing that he was going to his vehicle. The other man went to his own vehicle and left the area, but Cannegieter reportedly returned to the bar, before going back out into the parking lot in search of the man's vehicle.

Cannegieter was then seen arguing with some women who were inside a Jeep in the parking lot, before coming back to the bar. Shortly thereafter, he was once again involved in a verbal confrontation with the same women from the parking lot. The owner said he intervened, asking Cannegieter to go home, a request he refused, according to court documents. He eventually got into this vehicle and left, the owner told police, only to return minutes later.

Cannegieter reportedly ran up to the group of women with whom he had been arguing, resumed the confrontation, and ultimately ended up punching one of the women in the face, which prompted a fight between the women and the agitated man. The bar owner said he was unsuccessfully trying to separate the feuding patrons when he saw Cannegieter pull a black handgun from his waistband. The man told police he lunged for the gun and grabbed it with both hands. An extended magazine containing between 20 and 30 live rounds slid out of the weapon, and the bar owner said he pocketed it while still trying to gain control of the gun. Ultimately, the man told police he kneed Cannegieter, seized control of the firearm, and ran to place it near a gutter.

Cannegieter then left the area but once again returned minutes later, now asking for his handgun. Frustrated at being told that it had been thrown into the bushes, he reportedly responded by leaving before returning a third time and reportedly threatening to "mow the business down with a chopper." He left, and returned again, but this time, police units were already spotted en route to the bar.

After being arrested, Cannegieter refused to sign the Miranda Warning document or participate in the booking process. He was remanded into custody pending his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Friday, charges of possession of an unlicensed firearm were upheld against Cannegieter, who was offered pre-trial release upon the payment of \$1000. No further details about bail conditions were available as of press time.

Victor Cannegieter will next appear in court on June 28.

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