

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman Caught on Camera Brandishing Gun at Neighbors Over Tree Debris Dispute Facing Felony Charges

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Mugshot of Joanne Rhymer. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — A woman who allegedly pointed a gun at a couple complaining about her parents is now facing felony charges for possession of an unlicensed firearm, as well as assault.

On Thursday, police visited a residence in Anna's Retreat where they met with two people who said their neighbor's daughter pointed a gun at them. They shared surveillance footage with the responding officers, who subsequently reviewed it.

Police say the footage showed the couple outside around 9:25 a.m. on June 29, cleaning near the steps to their home. At that time, Joanne Rhymer is seen driving past them in a navy blue Nissan Sentra. She reportedly turned around, and drove past them again to park in front of her parents' gate, adjacent to the couple's home.

Rhymer then got out of her car and began arguing with the couple while holding a black gun in her hand. During the verbal altercation, she is seen pointing the gun at the couple several times, before walking up the stairs to her parents' home, firearm still visible in her hand. When she comes out of the residence and returns to her Sentra, the gun is nowhere to be seen.

When the couple came to the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) later that day to give their statements, they told police that while they were cleaning in front of their stairs this morning, they were complaining about the condition of the neighbor's property. Leaves from the mango trees next door often blow across, collecting right in front of those steps. The wife said she and her husband were grumbling about constantly having to clean the area of leaves from trees that do not belong to them, when the neighbor they were complaining about – Ms. Rhymer's father – began to shout at them. He was outside at the time, and reportedly reminded them that they did not live "over here," but "over there."

He also angrily encouraged them to "stay over there," the couple told police. The man's grandson, who police say lives in a separate house near Ms. Rhymer's parents, also came outside and began to shout expletives, threatening to shoot the couple if they did not leave his grandparents alone.

Shortly after these verbal exchanges, Joanne Rhymer is reported to have pulled up in the car, jumped out, and started to make death threats, holding the gun and pointing it at the couple. Inquiries by police revealed that Ms. Rhymer does not have a license to carry or possess a firearm on St. Thomas.

Later on that same Thursday, Mr. Rhymer's parents presented themselves at the VIPD's Criminal Investigation Bureau to provide statements of their own. Her father said that he was coming from the rear of his property and going back inside the home when he overheard the couple next door "going on" about the condition of his property. He told police that he advised them to stay on their side of the property line, and admitted that during the back and forth, his grandson came outside of his residence and joined in, "cussing" at the couple. The man said that he had previously called his daughter, Ms. Rhymer, to pick up groceries and her grandchildren, and said that she joined in the verbal spat when she arrived at his place, allegedly because she was being crudely reprimanded for driving over the neighbor's water hose

However, Ms. Rhymer's father told police that he never saw his daughter with a firearm that day, and also denied knowing that she owned a gun. Her mother said much the same thing, adding confirmation that the neighbors are often complaining about the condition in which the Rhymers keep their property.

Joanne Rhymer herself reported to the police station at about 5:20 p.m. that day, confirming that her parents had called her, that she had driven over the neighbors' water hose, and that there was a verbal altercation between herself and the people who live next to her parents' house. She claimed that she never had a firearm – that it was her

black waist bag in her hand that she pointed at the couple. Even when shown stills taken from the couple's surveillance footage, Ms. Rhymer continued to insist that the object in her hand was not a firearm but merely a bag. She acknowledged that she is not licensed to carry a firearm in the territory.

Ms. Rhymer was subsequently arrested and charged with unlawful possession of a firearm, brandishing and exhibiting a firearm, third-degree assault, first-degree reckless endangerment, and disturbance of the peace.

At her advice of rights hearing on Friday, Joanne Rhymer was assessed bail in the amount of \$25,000, but allowed to post just 10 percent of that sum in cash to secure her release. She is also ordered to stay at least 200 feet from the couple in question, and must not enter either her parents' or her relative's house in Anna's Retreat.

Her next court appearance is scheduled for July 28.