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Man Stopped for Illegal Tint Found With Unregistered Vehicle, Unregistered Gun

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Mugshot of Vernon Khodra By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — A man stopped for tint and license plate violations now faces firearm and ammunition charges after police reportedly found an unregistered gun under one of the floor mats.

VIPD officers were on mobile patrol in Frederiksted on July 13 when they saw a white 2-door BMW “with the entire front windshield tinted and no visible front license plates,” passing them in the opposite lane, according to the police arrest report.

After several marked police vehicles made U-turns and turned on their blue flashers behind the

BMW, it pulled over just east of the Estate Carlton Road entrance. Approached by four VIPD officers and instructed to present his license, registration and insurance, the driver – identified as Vernon Khodra – reached for his locked glove compartment. His hands were shaking, police noted, but Khodra, when asked, said that he was not nervous.

He was able to provide a driver's license, but did not have paperwork for the vehicle. He told police that he had just brought the BMW in from Florida, and presented a certificate of title from that state. Officers conducted a vehicle check of the BMW's identification number, which yielded negative results.

Smelling a strong odor of marijuana, the officers inquired and Khodra confirmed that there was some of the substance in the center console. He consented to a search, which officers told him was to ensure that he was not carrying more than the 28-gram legal limit.

During the search, officers noted that Khodra's hands were still shaking. Almost immediately after one officer enquired as to the reason, another officer who was conducting the search alerted that they had found a gun underneath the driver's side floor mat.

Khodra admitted to not having a license for the firearm and was arrested on the spot. The forensics team was called in and identified the weapon as a 9mm Taurus Millennium, with the serial number obliterated. The gun was loaded with three live rounds.

Vernon Khodra was arrested and charged with carrying of a firearm, possession of a firearm with obliterated serial number, possession of ammunition, operating a vehicle with tint past the AS1 line, operating an unregistered vehicle, and operating an uninsured vehicle.

Initial bail was set at \$50,000, and Khodra was remanded into custody to await his first court appearance. During his advice of right's hearing on Friday, the cash component of his bond was assessed at \$1000 by Judge Yolan Brow-Ross. Other details of his pre-trial release conditions have not been made available on the court's public access portal, nor has the date of his next court appearance been published on the platform.