

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Boats Impounded In Police Lot Stolen, Set Ablaze After Recent BVI Drug Bust

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Officers from the Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Service were seen battling a fire on the 'Donzi' vessel, which had been confiscated by the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force just a day earlier.

The Royal Virgin Islands Police Force is investigating a suspected arson after a boat seized in a recent drug bust was set on fire days later.

The powerboat "Donzi" was reportedly one of two vessels intercepted in British Virgin Islands waters on Wednesday evening, coming from the direction of Anguilla. Police had to chase after the boats, and Donzi is reported to have repeatedly rammed the police

vessel during the chase, injuring RVIPF officers and causing significant damage to the police boat.

Police fired upon the boat, and managed to detain both vessels. Two men and one woman were apprehended – all BVI nationals – and a significant quantity of cocaine was seized, along with a firearm and ammunition. The boats were impounded and were being kept at the Road Town Police Station.

In the wee hours of Saturday morning, Donzi was in flames, and the other boat was missing. A statement from the RVIPF called the arson a “calculated effort to destroy evidence,” but says that attempt failed, as all necessary examinations had already been completed. No relevant evidence was destroyed by the fire, police say, and their investigations into the drug bust continue unimpeded.

As of Saturday evening, 38-year old Dion Leslie McMaster was charged with possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply, unlawful possession of a controlled drug, keeping an unlicensed firearm and unlawful possession of ammunition. Zuri Reid, 40 and 28-year-old Ruth Gonzalez Tellez face charges of keeping an unlicensed firearm and unlawful possession of ammunition.

Several individuals were arrested in connection with the arson of Donzi and the theft of the other boat.

The RVIPF says that police investigators “continue to pursue several lines of inquiry” in the ongoing investigation. “The efforts to bring offenders to justice continue and will not be derailed by those who hope to escape detection and prosecution,” police say.