



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. CROIX MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO USING FIREARM **DURING CRIME OF VIOLENCE**

St. Croix, USVI - Jared James, 18, pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court on St. Croix to Using a Firearm During a Crime of Violence, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced.

According to the plea agreement filed with the court, on October 19, 2011, James pointed a gun at the owner of the Pickled Greek Restaurant on St. Croix while the owner was at the back of the restaurant, and twice demanded the keys to a Jeep. The owner explained to James that the Jeep was not his, and that it belonged to a woman who was in the parking lot. James walked the restaurant owner, at gunpoint, over to the owner of the vehicle, and demanded the keys to her car. The woman told James that the keys were in the car, and he drove off in the car heading east.

The two victims called the police and gave them a description of James and the vehicle. Police spotted the vehicle on Southside Road near the Halfpenny Beach entrance and attempted to stop it, but James accelerated. As James attempted to turn on Southside Road, the vehicle veered into the bushes in the Cane Garden area. Police saw James as he ran across a field and tossed a handgun on the ground in the vicinity of 5A Cane Garden. After a chase, James was caught and arrested.

Subsequently, James admitted that he had the gun, a Ruger Model P85, when he took the victim's car and that he stole the gun from the William's Delight area. A firearms trace revealed that the firearm was stolen from a vehicle in Miami Lakes, Florida in July 2011.

James faces a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years in prison. As part of his plea James agreed to pay restitution of \$2,800 for the damage to the vehicle. A sentencing date has been set for June 7, 2012.

The case was investigated by the Virgin Islands Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry.