

Police Respond to Multiple Firearm Incidents Friday Night, 3 June; Multiple Instances of Evading Police and Resisting Arrest

In the course of last Friday night and early Saturday, 3-4 June, officers received and responded to multiple reports of firearm activity made to the 9-1-1 Communications Centre. In the course of that evening one firearm arrest, as well as two arrests for resisting arrest and obstructing police, were made.

Around 11:30PM officers responded to a report regarding three men on North Sound Road, one of whom allegedly was in possession of a firearm. As officers approached three men answering to this description, one of the men ran off. Officers pursued the man to the rear of a building near Welly's Cool Spot, but did not locate him. A subsequent search of the area yielded a loaded firearm with five rounds of ammunition.

During the same search numerous packages of ganja were discovered in an abandoned vehicle, which were also seized.

A few hours later, just after 3:00AM Saturday morning, officers responded to a report of gunshots at the rear of the Fete Nightclub on West Bay Road in George Town. Upon arrival officers observed a large group of people in the parking lot; when asked about the report the people appeared inebriated and offered no information. Officers conducted a search of the parking lot and recovered a spent 9mm shell.

At the same time, just after 3:00AM, two officers responded to a 9-1-1 report regarding a man who had displayed a gun to members of the public in the vicinity of the Roof Top Bar on Mary Street. Armed officers in police uniform responded to the area and saw a man answering the description on Mary Street; officers exited their vehicle and identified themselves as armed police, and directed the man to stop, and show his hands. The man would not comply, at which point officers commanded him to get down on the ground. The suspect still refused, backing away as if to run. One officer stepped forward to detain the man, who wriggled out of his grasp and escaped, during the course of which an object resembling a firearm fell from the man's waistband.

The second officer pursued the man, who continued to resist arrest and struggle with the officer, behaving in a threatening and aggressive manner. At this point the officer deployed a Taser to contain the suspect. A crowd in the vicinity had gathered and advanced toward the officers in an aggressive and threatening manner. In the course of this the suspect pulled the Taser probes from his body and ran away, pursued by the first officer along the side of building. Again the suspect challenged both officers and lunged at one of them, during which time the Taser was deployed again. Other officers arrived and assisted with the arrest, while the suspect continued to threaten and struggle. The man, age 22, of East End, was ultimately subdued and arrested on suspicion of possession of an unlicensed firearm, resisting arrest and assaulting police.

Police recovered the firearm that fell from the man's waistband during the arrest, which turned out to be a flare gun painted black, with a spent shell inside. The gun is currently being examined. The man has been released on Police Bail while investigations continue.

In the course of this incident a man, age 34, of George Town, behaved in an obstructive and threatening manner toward police and was arrested on suspicion of obstructing police. He is currently on Police Bail.

In addition to the ongoing investigations into the incident, there will be internal review of the deployment of the Taser, which is a standard operating procedure of the RCIPS Service Use of Force Policy.

Since Friday night, a truncated video portraying only a slice of the incident described above has circulated widely on social media. Based on this video several people online have drawn conclusions about the incident in its entirety and added comments regarding officers' conduct during a difficult and dangerous incident, even though not in possession of all the facts. Such commentary may even give validation to recalcitrant young people who are creating a very unsafe environment around places of entertainment for law-abiding citizens. In some cases those online have even threatened certain officers who are assumed to have played some role in this incident.

This is not only disheartening to our officers, especially armed officers, who regularly take extreme risks such as those described in the incidents above in order to keep the island safe from the threats of drugs and firearms, but also generally degrades the security of law enforcement and public safety. Such threats will be taken and responded to seriously.

We ask that the community to work with us as we place ourselves in harm's way on a regular basis to pursue and arrest potentially dangerous persons.

Several incidents in recent months, including these last Friday, indicate an increased level of threat in the vicinity of night clubs on the weekends. A firearm was recovered by police outside one night club on 7 May, and in addition to these incidents outlined above last Friday, police also learned that ten knives were taken off patrons of another popular night club that night by security guards. Police are putting crime reduction strategies with respect to night clubs on the weekend in order to ensure the safety of our citizens, residents and visitors to have a safe place to go out and enjoy themselves. We ask for the community's assistance both to notify us of dangers they may see, as well as cooperate with police at the scenes of such incidents.

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