



MEDIA RELEASE
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30 2022

This Burlington Police Department press release provides additional information about four previous BPD press releases and/or incidents that have been the subject of previous local news reports. These include:

- A robbery that took place on Saturday 9/17/2022 at 0013 hours
- An attempted murder that took place on Monday 9/19/2022 at 1911 hours
- An assault and robbery that took place on Wednesday 9/28/2022 at 0732 hours
- An assault and robbery that took place on Wednesday 9/28/2022 at 1536 hours

“All of these incidents took place in the City Center Area,” said acting Chief of Police Jon Murad. “We described the CCA and our plans for it in the [BPD’s Modified Priority Response Plan](#), released on June first, 2022. Those plans were dependent on staffing, but since that time, sworn-officer staffing has continued to fall and incident volume has continued to rise, as described in my most recent [Chief’s Report to the Police Commission](#), from September 27, 2022. Despite the resource constraints that report describes, Mayor Weinberger and the City Council have taken decisive steps to provide rebuilding tools, including [a strong budget](#) and a [lucrative police contract](#). In the meantime, the BPD continues to respond to violent crimes of the type described below, and, as shown below, I believe patrol officers and detectives work extraordinarily hard to bring suspects to justice.”

The information below is preliminary and subject to change.

Robbery, Brown’s Court, Incident 22BU017824 – Saturday 9/17/2022 at 0013 hours

On Saturday, September 17, 2022 at approximately 0013 hours, three men allegedly approached a male victim on King St between St Paul St and Church St. These men had masked themselves, in some cases apparently with their t-shirts. They threatened the victim and one of the men pointed a firearm at the victim. They forced the victim to disrobe and took clothing and personal property, then fled.

Investigators had very little to work from, but were able to backtrack paths of travel, review video evidence, speak with business owners and personnel, and ultimately identify and arrest all three suspects.

The suspects were arrested on Thursday September 29. They are:

- Michael Chea, 24, of Winooski, charged with Assault and Robbery. Mr. Chea was arraigned on Thursday 9/29 and released from court on conditions.
- Zafer Suliman, 22, of Williston, charged with Assault and Robbery. Mr. Suliman was lodged at Northwest Correctional Facility on hold without bail status, and was arraigned this morning. The Officer of the State's Attorney sought to have him held in lieu of a responsible adult, but the Court released him on conditions.
- Latavious Elam, 23, of Williston, charged with Assault and Robbery. Mr. Elam was allegedly in possession of and threatened the victim with the firearm. He was lodged at Northwest Correctional Facility on hold without bail status, and was also held without bail at arraignment this afternoon.

Mr. Suliman and Mr. Elam are active-duty Air Force members. The BPD would like to thank the Air Force, Vermont Air National Guard, and the Vermont Army National Guard for their assistance and support in this investigation. The BPD also thanks the Vermont State Police NIU.

"This was a terrible crime," said acting Chief of Police Jon Murad. "There was a frightening sense of randomness to that sent a lot of ripples through our community. I am incredibly impressed by and proud of the work that the assigned investigator, Detective Corporal Erica Schaller, did on this case. It involved hours of video review and significant amounts of good old gumshoe work, but she got results."

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704.

Attempted Murder, Battery Park, Incident 22BU018340 – Monday 9/19/2022 at 1911 hours

On Monday, September 19, 2022, at approximately 1911 hours, a 35-year-old woman appeared in the lobby of police headquarters and stated she had been stabbed in the chest. She was taken to the hospital for surgery and survived, but remained at the hospital for several days. A second woman, 59, who was the first woman's mother, also suffered hand lacerations.

The second woman's statements led to the identification of a male suspect, Tyrone O. Bryant, 44, who is known to the BPD from more than 170 law-enforcement encounters. (See this [2019](#)

[press release.](#)) Mr. Bryant has a domestic relationship with the victim, and at the time of the incident he had two sets of active conditions of release prohibiting him from having contact with the victim. Police issued a “BOL,” or “Be On Lookout” notice, about the suspect. But as officers continued to investigate, additional witness statements revealed conflicting stories. The victim refused to identify a suspect and the second woman recanted her initial statements. As a result, police canceled the BOL for Mr. Bryant, although we still sought to interview him.

The case was transferred to the BPD’s Domestic Violence Prevention Officer, Erin Bartle. Officer Bartle was able to approach the victim through a domestic-violence and trauma-informed lens, owing to specialized training associated with her role. She worked with both victims in a way that addressed challenging issues common to domestic-violence cases such as cooperation, testimony, and fear of retaliation. Mr. Bryant was confirmed to be the alleged perpetrator, and police arrested him without incident on Friday, September 23. He was held without bail on charges of attempted second-degree murder, and is currently still in custody.

“Domestic violence is a challenging crime,” said acting Chief of Police Jon Murad, “often marked by complicated circumstances. This is why having a Domestic Violence Prevention Officer is so important. As headcount has changed over the past two years, we have lost many specialized positions. One that I have retained is the DVPO, because for cases like this it can make all the difference. Officer Bartle did exemplary work on this attempted murder.”

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704.

Assault and Robbery, ATM at 125 St Paul Street, Incident 22BU018675 – Wednesday 9/28/2022 at 0732 hours

[Previous Press Release for 22BU018675](#)

Patrol investigators have identified the suspect in this crime as Ashley Richards, 39.

Ms. Richards is currently not in custody but is wanted on anticipated charges of assault and robbery.

On Wednesday, September 28, at approximately 0732 hours, she is alleged to have assaulted a 69-year-old male victim who uses a motorized wheelchair. The victim reported that he entered the ATM vestibule at the address and observed two women inside, at least one of whom was apparently sleeping. He proceeded to withdraw currency and once it was dispensed, one of the women reached over his shoulder, took the money, and struck him in the face. She fled west on Main Street. The BPD's K9 officer responded, and conducted a canine track with negative results. A BPD detective obtained surveillance footage. Photos of the suspect were circulated among BPD employees and various social-service partners and the suspect was identified as Ms. Richards.



Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704.

Assault and Robbery, Cherry St Walgreens, Incident 22BU018731 – Wednesday 9/28/2022 at 1536 hours

[Previous Press Release for 22BU018731](#)

At approximately 1536 hours on Wednesday, September 28, 2022, the Burlington Police Department's Emergency Communications Center received numerous calls about a fight in the parking lot of the Cherry St Walgreens. Responding officers located a severely injured male victim. He was transported to the hospital and ultimately diagnosed with multiple skull fractures, broken ribs, and ocular injuries that may yet result in the loss of an eye.

BPD detectives, with great assistance from agents of the The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and detectives of the Vermont State Police Narcotics Investigation Unit were able to identify the suspect as Jashier A. Gillespie, 20, of Philadelphia, PA. During his arrest on Thursday, September 29, Mr. Gillespie fled police but was ultimately apprehended.

Mr. Gillespie has been charged with assault and robbery, aggravated assault, and resisting arrest. He was lodged at Northwest Correctional Facility on hold without bail status, in part

owing to having no ties to the community. He has an extensive criminal history in Pennsylvania, including arrests for felony robbery, aggravated assault, criminal conspiracy, and drug charges.

The victim is in stable condition and is being treated at UVMHC.

“This was a particularly brutal crime,” said acting Chief of Police Jon Murad, “and we believe it to be associated with narcotics trafficking. As always, I am proud of the work our detectives have done, but I also want to extend particular thanks to our federal partners in the ATF and our state partners from the VSP’s NIU. Their assistance was essential in making this timely arrest of a violent felon.”

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Burlington Police Department at (802) 658-2704.

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