



Classic car dealer Ted Vernon starred for four seasons on the Discovery Channel's *South Beach Classics*. **Courtesy of Ted Vernon**

***South Beach Classics* Star Ted Vernon Indicted on Federal Gun Charge**

JESSICA LIPSCOMB | DECEMBER 1, 2017 | 8:59AM

Update: The Velocity network says it is no longer associated with Ted Vernon. The channel's statement has been posted below.

On Velocity's *South Beach Classics*, reality TV star Ted Vernon was known for his short temper and sharp tongue. But behind the scenes, employees and relatives of the Miami-based classic car dealer **say he was straight-up abusive**. In March, a

Broward County judge issued a permanent restraining order to keep Vernon away from his estranged wife and TV costar Robin Ziel, who says he routinely beat her.

Now prosecutors say Vernon has violated the court order, which bars him from possessing firearms. Earlier this month, the 69-year-old was indicted on a federal weapons charge after allegedly loading guns into a vehicle being shipped out of PortMiami and later storing those firearms at his home in Plantation. A grand jury found that Vernon violated terms that "explicitly prohibited the use, attempted use, and threatened use of physical force against [an] intimate partner."

Vernon, who is out on \$250,000 bond, now faces ten years in federal lockup.

"It's unfortunate that it has come to this, however something needed to change because I'm afraid that if the federal government hadn't gotten involved it may have cost me my life," Ziel says in a statement.

The Broward County protective order was issued after Ziel accused him of multiple instances of domestic violence. Over the years, Ziel, who has filed for divorce, says Vernon emotionally, financially, and physically abused her, including **a brutal 2015 attack where she was battered and hospitalized**. In police reports and court depositions, two of Vernon's children have also said they were physically abused by their father.

Speaking with *New Times* earlier this year, Vernon denied all claims of abuse and accused Ziel of a smear campaign. His criminal attorney, Barry Wax, declined to comment on the pending federal charge.

The new case stems from an October incident at PortMiami. According to an affidavit, customs agents at the port contacted the ATF October 10 after 12 firearms were found in the trunk of one of Vernon's vehicles that was being shipped to Germany. Agents ran the serial numbers and seized one of the guns after it came back as stolen.

Two days later, Vernon picked up the remaining 11 guns from the port, signing a property receipt confirming that he was taking them back. It wasn't until days later that ATF agents realized there was an active order banning Vernon from having firearms.

On October 25, the feds found Vernon at his dealership in Little River and followed him home to his house in Plantation, where the 11 guns were found in a closet. The weapons included several shotguns and hunting rifles, according to court documents.

Based on the terms of his bond, Vernon was forced to surrender his passport and must remain in South Florida until the case is resolved. A jury trial has been tentatively set for January.

Ziel's full statement is below:

It's unfortunate that it has come to this, however something needed to change because I'm afraid that if the federal government hadn't gotten involved it may have cost me my life. If the judicial system works in the favor of the people then everybody who Ted has victimized may finally feel safe and begin to heal from this tumultuous experience. People like Ted truly believe that they are above the law and that they can buy themselves out of these sorts of situations; I myself have witnessed this on many occasions. I can only hope that this is not the case and that myself and my children will finally be able to move on, start over, and begin to live the lives we deserve to live – without having to constantly look over our shoulders.

In recent months there have been multiple mass shootings in the United States and anybody who has been caught with this many illegal firearms should be charged to the highest degree in order to protect the general public. This isn't just about myself and my family, this is about every single woman or person who has suffered from domestic abuse. It needs to be understood that if he had not been stopped somebody, or multiple people, would have lost their lives.

Update, 11:30 a.m. *Velocity's Director of Communications, Andrew Scafetta, has issued the following statement to New Times:*

"In your article about Ted Vernon you refer to South Beach Classics as 'Velocity's South Beach Classics.' I'm writing to let you know that Velocity does not air South Beach Classics and has not aired the program in quite some time. Ted Vernon is not associated with the network and shouldn't be referred to in those terms."

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