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Owner of 5 Pit Bulls That Almost Killed 84-Year-Old Man Arrested Four Months Later

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Elson A. Jones By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — The owner of seven pit bull dogs — five of which viciously attacked an 84-year-old man in his own yard last year in Clifton Hill — was arrested on Wednesday morning some four months following the incident that almost killed the victim, identified by family as Gladestone Alexander Simon, Sr. Mr. Simon had to be airlifted to Puerto Rico for treatment and had remained in critical condition while there. In October, the family of Mr. Simon [solicited the community's help](#) in raising funds to transfer their father to a John Hopkins facility on the mainland. The transfer, to include specialized equipment needed to keep Mr. Simon stable during the flight, cost between \$35,000-\$40,000, according to Gladestone Alexander Simon, Jr., the son of the victim.

On Thursday, the V.I.P.D. said Elson A. Jones was arrested pursuant to a warrant issued by the Superior Court. Mr. Jones was charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, registration, confinement and confiscation of dangerous dogs, ferocious, vicious or mischievous animals and dogs running at large.

Bail for the suspect was set at \$10,000, and Mr. Jones was remanded to the Golden Grove Detention Center after failing to secure bond.

The victim was [ravaged by the five pit bulls on the night of Sept. 4](#). According to several individuals who witnessed the attack, some of whom were also attacked by the dogs previously in the Clifton Hill neighborhood, the man was in his yard when the dogs rushed him and started barbarously biting his flesh. As the attack was occurring, frightful and angry neighbors called for help. They called 911 seeking immediate reponse — doing so with a high level of frustration as they had reported the dogs numerous times before to police with little results.

According to the neighbors, the wild pit bull dogs, 7 in total, belonged to a neighbor at the entrance of the street. This neighbor, a man, had been urged many times to properly secure the dogs in his yard because of the animals' aggressive behavior toward the community, the neighbors said. The dogs have attacked virtually every family in the small neighborhood, according to multiple eyewitness.

Gladestone said the wounds on his father's right leg as of October were still open. "The doctors are stating that they can't close the wounds up because of the bacteria from the dogs, so they have to keep it clean and there's a [hyperbaric] chamber utilized everyday to make sure that the leg is being cared for, and they said it is very important that they be very careful with the surgery portion of it because they don't want him to lose his leg," he said.

Following the incident, five of the 7 pit bulls were euthanized. Another was held by authorities, and a the last, a female, was left with the owner because it had recently given birth to puppies, according to Danny Rodriquez, lead detective for animal cruelty at the V.I.P.D.

In October, Gladestone said while he intended on eventually taking on the criminal matter, his focus was on the medical care of his father. "I received a few phone calls from attorneys that would like to pursue the case, but I just don't have the time to address that right now," he said in October. "I want to make sure I focus on my dad's care. Right now I'm in the Virgin Islands trying to take care of his personal affairs. I also finally got power of attorney because I would like to take care of his financial needs — making sure his bills continue to get paid. It's pretty tough for us right now."

Photos of the attack viewed by the Consortium show what appeared to be the man's right foot disfigured with wounds and blood all over it; his chin showed a gaping wound and a deep gash under his lower lip.