

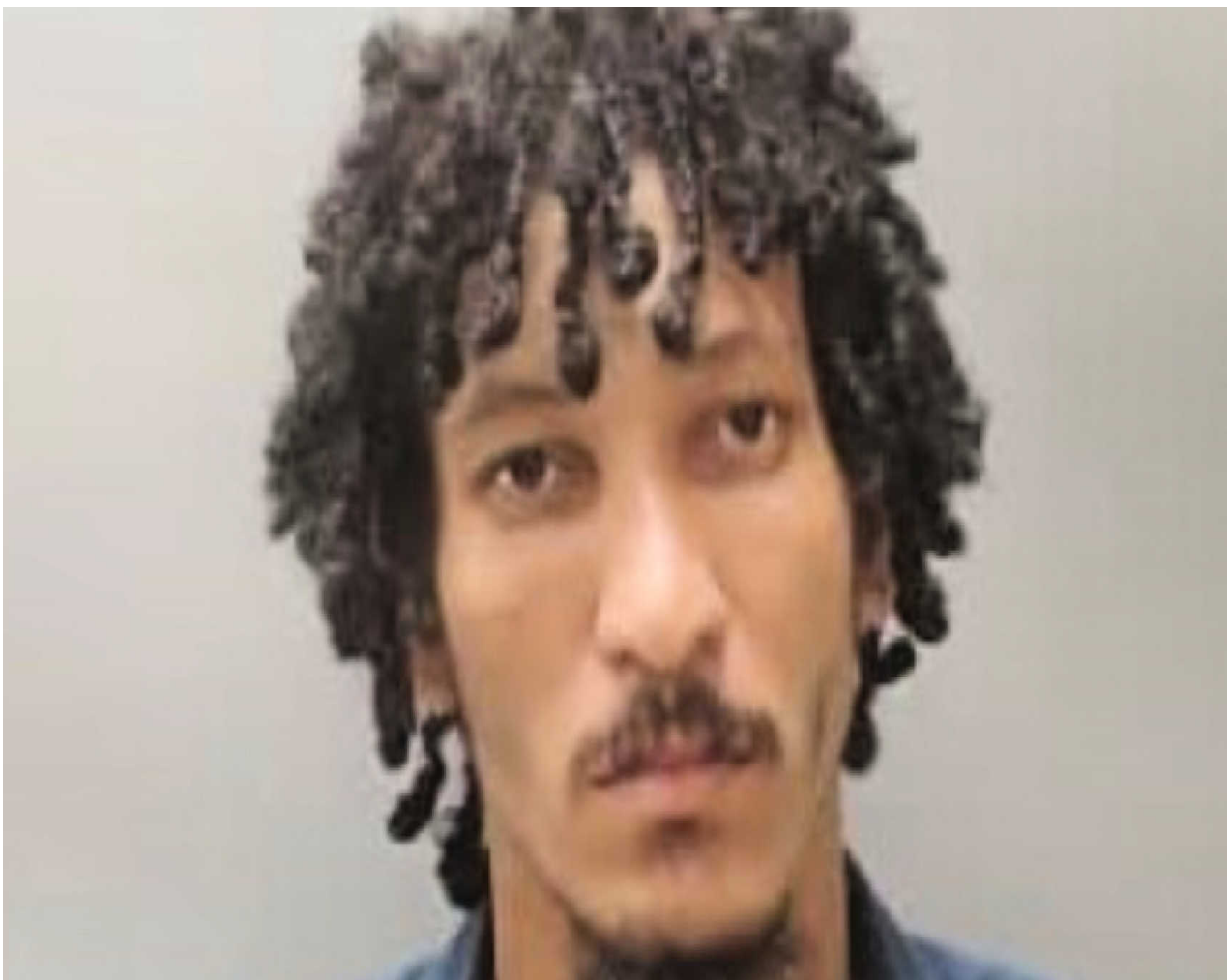
The Virgin Islands Consortium

Witness Identifies Man in Theft at St. John's Head Start Construction Site

Neighbor's account cites Omar Stephens in material theft from construction site

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Mugshot of Omar Stephens. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. JOHN — A man who police say stole material from the Head Start construction site on St. John is now facing larceny and trespass charges in court.

The incident occurred on the morning of November 13, when police were summoned to a location in Enighed St. John. Responding officers met the superintendent of the project site, who told them that he had arrived to work to find a metal post sticking out from

underneath the gate.

The resident of a neighboring house told the superintendent, and subsequently the police, that hours earlier, they had seen a man named “Omar” removing items from the job site. “Omar”, the resident said, had crawled back and forth under the fence dragging posts off the property to a nearby residence. The witness said that they threatened to call the police the third time “Omar” went under the fence, upon which he ran off, leaving the post he was carrying behind.

Investigating officers went to the area the neighbor had indicated “Omar” was taking the posts, and found the two that had already been removed from the job site, valued at a combined total of \$1050.

According to documents before the court, police suspected that Omar Stephens may be the culprit. In an interview at the Leander Jurgen Command police station on November 30, the witness positively identified Stephens based on a photo array presented to her.

Stephens was arrested on December 4 and charged with grand larceny, trespassing, and possessing stolen property. Unable to meet the initial bail requirement of \$20,000, he was then remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court last Wednesday, Magistrate Paula Norkaitis found probable cause to uphold all charges against Stephens, and granted pretrial release upon the payment of 10 percent of the stipulated bail amount.

Before he can be released ahead of trial, however, Stephens must first identify a suitable third-party custodian. Once out of detention, he will be restricted to the St. Thomas/St. John/Water Islands district, and must contact the probation office every week by telephone. The presiding judge also ordered that Stephens immediately begin looking for work, contacting at least two employers every week. A daily curfew from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. will also be imposed, as well as a ban on alcohol or controlled substances.

The next court appearance for Omar Stephens is scheduled for January 5, 2024.