

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DOJ Arrest Man on Contractor Fraud Charges Following Botched Job on Hurricane-Damaged Home

Crime / **Published On February 24, 2020 05:37 AM /**

Robert Moore **February 24, 2020**



ST. CROIX – The V.I. Department of Justice (VIDOJ) executed an arrest warrant for a local man who allegedly misrepresented himself as a licensed contractor to perform work repairs to a St. Croix resident's home.

Attorney General Denise George announced the arrest of David Valliere, 58-years-old on Sunday. No additional information about him was immediately available.

VIDOJ Special Agent Gisselle Quinones conducted the financial fraud investigation and executed the warrant for the arrest.

Valliere faces felony charges of obtaining money by false pretense, grand larceny, and embezzlement by clerks, agents, employees, etc. in relation to obtaining money for repairs to a hurricane damaged home that he did not intend to complete.

?Magistrate Miguel Camacho found that there was probable cause to sustain all the charges and to move the case forward.

Bail was set at \$50,000 and Valliere was ordered to have no contact with the witness and report to the probation office weekly. Valliere cannot leave the territory and he must reside with a third-party custodian or post 10-percent of bail.

?According to an affidavit in support of the arrest warrant filed by Mr. Quinones, an investigation revealed that Valliere presented himself to Jose Torres who resides at Hill Street, Christiansted and offered to perform repairs to his home that sustained damages due to Hurricane Maria on September 21, 2017.

Torres submitted repair claims to Cunningham and Lindsey through Marshal & Sterling following the hurricane. An inspector then submitted an estimate for the total sum of damages sustained, which amounted to \$35,971.37.

Torres had a conversation with Valliere who claimed he was a licensed contractor and agreed to do the work on the home. On May 5, 2018 Valliere submitted a proposal to Mr. Torres bearing the company name "Freedom City Handyman", and a second proposal bearing Valliere's name on June 2, 2018.

Torres stated that he was under the impression that Valliere was a licensed contractor, but he eventually got into a dispute with Valliere over the poor job being done and the lack of manpower. Inspections were requested and completed that revealed inconsistencies.

Torres made an initial complaint at the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs on January 22, 2019 for lack of services rendered by Valliere, and a hearing was held. Contact was made with Stephen Hoczack, the licensed owner of Freedom City Handyman who was able to provide documentation that Valliere is not an employee of his nor does he have the authority to represent his company. A citation was issued to Valliere on February 6, 2019 with a penalty of \$500.00 for operating without a business license. Valliere then halted work in March of 2019. Valliere received a total of \$23,980.80 from Torres. However the work has not been completed. ?

According to DOJ Special Agent Quinones, on August 19, 2019, she visited the home to photograph the work that was done, and she reported that as a result of the poor job, Torres' home is still exposed to the outside elements.

AG George reminds the public that any person charged with a crime in the Virgin Islands is considered to be innocent until proven guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction.