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Contractor Abraham Carty Arrested for Defrauding Clients Following Economic Crime Unit Investigations

Carty faces multiple charges, including grand larceny and delivering worthless checks, after complaints from property owners and a detailed investigation by the Economic Crime Unit

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Mugshot of Abraham Carty. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Two investigations by the V.I. Police Department's Economic Crime Unit have led to the arrest of a contractor accused of defrauding clients.

Abraham Carty was arrested on Tuesday on an outstanding warrant issued in February, following complaints by two property owners who alleged that he defrauded them of money on their projects.

According to court documents, the first investigation began last August when the Economic Crime Unit interviewed Mr. Carty regarding a complaint made by a client. Mr. Carty stated that he was working on a construction job when he ran \$50,000 over budget. The client advanced him the money to complete the work, and Mr. Carty agreed to repay the debt in monthly installments of \$2,000. He made these payments until the balance was nearly halved. Mr. Carty claimed that he and the client then agreed he could work off the remaining balance on another project.

Mr. Carty told police that communication with the client was interrupted after he lost phone service. Consequently, work on the project halted. When he returned to the job site a week later, he discovered that the client had replaced him on the project. Mr. Carty stated that he gave the client a check but warned that he did not have an account at that bank. He claimed that the client accepted the invalid check as security and that there was a witness to this arrangement. Mr. Carty alleged that the client tried to cash the check anyway and became upset when it was denied by the bank. However, Mr. Carty could not provide detectives with any proof of these key details. Investigators also noted that Mr. Carty admitted to writing the check against an account that had been closed for more than four years.

When police interviewed the client the next day, the client had a different recollection of events. The client claimed that the initial debt was \$32,000 and that the \$25,500 balance was supposed to be paid via check. The client denied agreeing to let Mr. Carty work off the debt on another job. After handing over the check for \$25,500, the client said Mr. Carty asked him to wait before depositing it. The client said he waited several months before attempting to deposit the check. When he informed Mr. Carty of his intention to deposit the check, Mr. Carty responded "OK." The client provided a copy of the returned check, which was marked "closed account," and denied Mr. Carty's claim that there was a witness to the check handover.

About a month after his initial interview with police, Mr. Carty brought another check for \$5,000 made out to the client. He also presented detectives with an agreement to pay the client \$5,000 per week for the next four weeks. However, he never made any further payments.

In October 2023, another client filed a complaint with the police. The woman said she first met Mr. Carty in 2018. In August 2023, she saw him again and inquired about him doing work on some stairs. He provided an estimate that was above her budget of \$2,500, but agreed to start with a reduced scope of work for a check of \$1,500, dated September 1, 2023.

Mr. Carty was supposed to return in two weeks to begin the repairs. The check was cashed the same day it was written. About a week later, Mr. Carty texted the woman, saying he needed to take additional measurements. After two weeks passed, the woman began calling his phone, but received no answer and only a recorded message in Spanish. She never saw Mr. Carty again.

Detectives investigating the complaints also had trouble reaching Mr. Carty, who was reportedly under investigation for a separate matter even before these two complaints.

After his arrest, Mr. Carty was charged with drawing and delivering worthless checks, two counts of obtaining money by false pretense, and two counts of grand larceny.

In court on Wednesday, Magistrate Simone VanHoltten-Turnbull found probable cause to uphold all charges against Mr. Carty and set bail at \$35,000, payable in full. If he secures his release before trial, Mr. Carty will be required to report to the probation office in person twice a week while continuing his work as a contractor.

His next court appearance is scheduled for July 26.

