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St. Thomas Man Arrested for Using Stolen Credit Card Numbers to Purchase Boat Engine

Police say Alvin Battiste used stolen card details, fled arrest scene; victims include California and Florida residents

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Mugshot of Alvin Battiste. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Police arrested a man who they say used what appear to be two stolen credit card numbers to purchase a boat engine.

According to court documents, back in August, a man filed a police report with the VIPD's Economic Crimes Unit alleging that a customer fraudulently used credit cards in an attempt to purchase a boat engine. The man, who managed a marine supply store, said that he received a call in early July inquiring about a specific engine, which they had in stock. Two men came to the

establishment that day, picked up the engine and loaded it onto a truck that had accompanied them.

One of the men, later identified as Alvin Battiste, first tried to pay by providing the manager with credit card numbers stored on his phone to be processed manually. Those numbers did not work, even after Battiste called the card company and attempted to run the transaction with a smaller amount. Upon walking Battiste and the other man outside to their vehicle, the store manager noticed that the truck had left with the engine. Battiste attempted to call family members to get other card information, and told the store manager that he and his companion had lost their guns, identification and drugs in a jet ski accident.

Spooked by these comments and the fact of his missing engine, the store manager demanded that the truck return with the equipment until it was paid for. While awaiting the truck's return, two other credit card numbers were provided, and those were charged successfully. The store manager decided to hold on to the engine while the card processing company verified the transactions as legitimate, which they did. The item was therefore delivered the next morning.

A month later, the store was hit with two chargebacks for the purchase of the engine. While the receipt was made out to an "AJ Battice", investigators found that the cards, which were successfully charged belonged to two different people unrelated to Battiste or to each other. One was in the name of a man who lived in California, and the other belonged to a resident of Florida. Local police spoke to the California resident who told them that he had never even been to the Virgin Islands before. He spotted the \$4000 transaction and reported it to his bank as fraudulent activity. The charges were reversed and he was issued a new card, the man told police.

Officers tracked Battiste down to the Starz Hotel on September 16, and found that he was a guest of the establishment, staying in a room reserved by a woman who had never provided the hotel with a physical credit card that matched the ID provided.

Upon being informed that he was being arrested, Battiste reportedly tried to make a run for it, jumping over the hotel gate and running in the direction of a nearby car wash. He was apprehended by patrol officers, charged with two counts each of fraudulent use of a card, receipt of money, goods and services obtained by fraudulent use of credit cards, and grand larceny. He was then remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing in court.

The outcome of Battiste's court appearance on Monday has not yet been made available to the public, however court records indicate that Magistrate Simone VanHolten-Turnbull did issue a pretrial release order of some kind. Mr. Battiste's arraignment has been scheduled for October 4.