

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Man Accused of Setting Employer's Machinery on Fire Over \$4,000 Wage Dispute

Police say Rasheem Skeet admitted to setting his employer's Bobcat skid steer on fire after a promised \$500 payment was not transferred. The dispute stemmed from \$4,000 in unpaid wages. Skeet has been charged and released on an unsecured bond.

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Mugshot of Rasheem Skeet. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. CROIX — A dispute over unpaid wages has landed a St. Croix man before the courts after police said he set his employer's heavy machinery on fire at a Frederiksted solar farm.

According to court documents, officers were dispatched to the property on Thursday afternoon following reports of a vehicle fire. At the scene, the business owner told police that employee Rasheem Skeet had poured gasoline on one of his Bobcat skid steer machines and ignited it. The owner admitted owing Skeet \$4,000 in back pay, which he said was the reason behind the act.

Police later located Skeet at his home and brought him to the Wilbur H. Francis Command police station for questioning. There, he explained that the previous day, he and another worker had approached their employer about when the overdue wages would be paid. Skeet said he needed the money to cover rent and to prepare for his son's return to school. According to him, the employer promised to wire \$500 to his account.

When he checked the next day and found that no payment had been made, Skeet admitted to returning to the solar farm with gasoline in a container and using it to set the Bobcat ablaze. Officers observed fire damage to the machine's interior, and Skeet was arrested. He was charged with incendiarism and destruction of property.

On Friday, Skeet appeared before Magistrate Venetia Velazquez, who found probable cause to uphold both charges. The judge allowed him to sign an unsecured bond covering the full \$5,500 bail requirement. His next court appearance is scheduled for September 24.