

St. Thomas Theft Suspect Slips Handcuffs Twice After Turning Himself In, Police Say

Shakeem Ostalaza allegedly admitted to stealing beachwear and other items from a vehicle before slipping his restraints inside CIB, fleeing, and being recaptured. He faces grand larceny, escape, and other charges.

Crime / **Published On November 21, 2025 07:04 AM /**

Staff Consortium **November 21, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



The VIPD has not released a mugshot of Shakeem Ostalaza. This story will be updated if one becomes available.

ST. THOMAS — A man arrested in connection with a vehicle theft briefly escaped custody twice this week, slipping out of his restraints inside the Criminal Investigation Bureau before officers were able to apprehend him again, according to court documents. The unusual sequence of events

unfolded after police linked the suspect to a series of stolen items that had reportedly been handed out in the Smith Bay area.

The investigation began Monday morning after police were notified of a vehicle break-in. Officers met with the owner, who said he had parked at the entrance of Estate Thomas on Sunday night while visiting his parents. He told police he fell asleep and returned to his vehicle around 8 a.m. Monday, when he noticed his sunglasses were no longer where he had left them. A further check revealed missing items, including several boxes of beachwear, a tool kit, a child's life vest, a GPS device, and an empty firearm magazine.

On Tuesday, the man contacted police again after spotting someone in Smith Bay wearing one of the stolen items. That individual reportedly said the shirt came from Shakeem Ostalaza, who had allegedly been giving away the stolen clothing in Smith Bay Yard. Later that day, an officer saw Ostalaza at Coki Point Beach wearing one of the shirts, though the officer was unable to detain him. On Tuesday evening, however, the suspect arrived at the Richard Callwood Command and turned himself in.

Inside the station, Ostalaza reportedly admitted to the theft and agreed to return what he had taken. While in the CIB interview room, he slipped out of his handcuffs and fled the building. Officers located him near Education Street and brought him back into custody. According to police, he managed to slip the restraints a second time but was stopped before he could leave. He told officers he would help them locate any remaining stolen items "after court."

Ostalaza was charged with grand larceny, possession of stolen property, vehicle tampering, interfering with an officer, and escape from custody. He appeared Thursday before Magistrate Paula Norkaitis, who found probable cause for all charges. His bail was set at \$50,000, with the option to post 10 percent in cash for release ahead of trial. Conditions of release include weekly in-person reporting to probation, travel restrictions, and a ban on alcohol, controlled substances, and possession of firearms, ammunition, or any dangerous weapon.

His next court appearance is scheduled for December 19.