

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Father Accused of Leaving Toddler in Duffel Bag Near Roadway

Police say the child's father admitted leaving the one-year-old outside her mother's gate because he had to go to work, believing she was home; the mother, recovering from illness, later found the infant near the roadway inside a duffel bag.

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Mugshot of Garth Eugene. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — A man has been arrested and charged with multiple felonies after allegedly leaving his one-year-old daughter outside her mother's residence without notifying her, according to police.

Officers were dispatched Monday morning to a home in Bovoni following a report involving the unattended child. Upon arrival, police spoke with the child's mother, who explained that she had been hospitalized in early February after falling ill and subsequently left the territory to receive further medical care. She returned on Saturday and, on Sunday, brought her daughter to the home of the child's father, identified by police as Garth Eugene.

The mother told officers she informed Eugene that the child had an extra set of clothing, noting that he was off work on Monday and that she was still recovering and unable to fully care for the child.

On Monday morning, however, the woman said she received a call from her father, who told her that Eugene had informed him that he had left the one-year-old outside the gate of her mother's house. The woman told police that when she went outside to check, she found her daughter near the roadway inside a duffel bag. Eugene was not present at the scene.

According to the report, the woman took photographs of the crying child and then contacted 911 for assistance.

Police later made contact with Eugene, who reportedly admitted that he had left his minor child outside her mother's gate. He told officers that he did so because he had to go to work and observed the mother's vehicle in the yard.

Eugene was arrested and charged with child neglect, child abuse, and first-degree reckless endangerment. Bail was set at \$110,000. Unable to immediately post the required amount, he was remanded into custody pending his initial court appearance, scheduled for Tuesday.

As of press time, no court records indicate the outcome of Tuesday's advice of rights hearing. An arraignment has been scheduled for March 6 before Magistrate Simone VanHolten-Turnbull.