

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Accused of Stealing Vehicle, Leading Police on High-Speed Chase, Arrested Nude in Bar Restroom

Court documents allege Edward Richards took a vehicle left running at Vitracó Mall, fled police at high speed, ran into a bar restroom, ignored commands and inhaled from a suspected crack pipe before being taken into custody.

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Mugshot of Edward Richards. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — A man was arrested on Monday after reportedly taking a vehicle without permission and leading police on a high-speed chase.

According to court documents, around 8 p.m. on February 16, officers on Alton Adams Drive spotted a white Toyota Yaris speeding down the road, overtaking multiple vehicles in what they considered to be a reckless manner. Police, lights and sirens activated, attempted to perform a traffic stop, but the driver of the Yaris ignored them, reportedly increasing his speed and weaving through traffic in an attempt to escape.

Officers followed the vehicle toward Polyberg Hill. It then turned into the Hospital Ground area and stopped near a business establishment. The driver, later identified as Edward Richards, ran into a nearby bar, with a human and a canine officer in pursuit.

The bartender reportedly gestured toward the restroom when police came in. Richards reportedly ignored several commands to exit. After additional officers arrived, they entered the restroom to find that he had taken off his clothing and was completely nude. He continued to ignore their commands to leave the small restroom, and reportedly lit and inhaled from what police believed to be a crack pipe, all in their presence.

It took two detectives to drag the naked man out of the restroom and place him in handcuffs.

Officers learned that the vehicle's owner had left the vehicle running outside the laundromat at Vitraco Mall while he went in for a short period of time. The Yaris was gone when he came outside, and he then called 911 to report the theft.

After his arrest, Richards was charged with unauthorized use of a vehicle, reckless operation, first-degree reckless endangerment, and interfering with an officer discharging his duties. Unable to meet the initial bail requirement of \$57,000, he was remanded into custody to await his first court appearance.

On Wednesday, Magistrate Simone VanHolten-Turnbull found that Mr. Richards did not appear stable enough to proceed with his advice of rights hearing. She ordered that a psychiatric evaluation be commenced on Thursday, and delayed further court proceedings until Friday.