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Attorney General Vows Aggressive Prosecution in $888,500 Fraud Case as Brett “Mac” McClafferty Faces Multiple Felony Charges

Gordon C. Rhea says financial crimes “undermine trust” as Brett “Mac” McClafferty, 37, is charged with grand larceny and related offenses tied to 12 alleged fraudulent transactions totaling approximately $888,500 between January and June 2024.

Crime / **Published On February 23, 2026 06:34 PM /**

Staff Consortium February 23, 2026

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Mugshot of Brett McClafferty. **By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

Attorney General Gordon Rhea on Monday said his office is committed to aggressively prosecuting Brett “Mac” McClafferty in connection with an alleged $888,500 fraud scheme, warning that financial crimes erode public confidence in the territory’s institutions.

“Financial crimes undermine trust in our banking institutions and harm our community. The Virgin Islands Department of Justice remains committed to aggressively prosecuting individuals who engage in fraudulent schemes and ensuring that those responsible are held accountable under the law.”

Rhea’s statement follows McClafferty’s arrest over the weekend in a case reported Sunday by The Consortium, which detailed allegations stemming from a complaint filed by Banco Popular de Puerto Rico.

On Monday, the Department of Justice confirmed that McClafferty, 37, was advised of his rights during a hearing held February 23, 2026, in the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. The matter is being prosecuted by the DOJ’s White Collar Crime and Public Corruption Unit.

He is charged with grand larceny, passing or possession of forged bills, obtaining money by false pretense, making and passing fictitious bills and notes, and drawing and delivering worthless checks.

The court set bond at $150,000 but authorized him to post $15,000 cash, representing 10 percent of the total amount. Attorney Nicole Lynn King-Richardson appeared as counsel on his behalf during the advice-of-rights proceedings. No future court dates were set at that time.

As conditions of release, McClafferty must surrender his passport, along with his Virgin Islands and Ohio driver’s licenses. He is not permitted to leave St. Thomas without permission of the court. He is not subject to house arrest or electronic monitoring. However, he was ordered to have no firearms, ammunition, dangerous weapons, controlled substances, or alcohol abuse.

During the proceeding, McClafferty stated that he has resided on St. Thomas since 2020 and has owned St. Thomas Social at Yacht Haven Grande since 2023.

According to investigators, the charges stem from suspected fraudulent activity occurring between January and June 2024. As previously reported, Banco Popular de Puerto Rico filed a complaint alleging that McClafferty deposited counterfeit and fraudulent checks drawn on entities in the British Virgin Islands and issued bank drafts from a Discover account that were later returned due to stop-payment requests or insufficient funds.

Investigators allege that funds were withdrawn and transferred to third parties before the financial instruments were returned unpaid. Authorities identified at least twelve fraudulent transactions totaling approximately $888,500 conducted through business and personal accounts associated with McClafferty.

Banco Popular reported a confirmed financial loss exceeding $80,000. Several counterfeit checks originating from the British Virgin Islands were reportedly flagged before funds could be withdrawn, preventing additional losses.

An arrest warrant was issued on December 30, 2025, by Superior Court Magistrate Julie S. Todman. The warrant was executed on February 21, 2026, at McClafferty’s residence in St. Joseph & Rosendahl by the Virgin Islands Police Department’s Economic Crime Unit, Special Operations Bureau, and Criminal Investigation Bureau, with assistance from the United States Postal Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As reported Sunday, McClafferty was transported to the Richard Callwood Central Command for processing. Unable to post bail at the time, he was remanded to the custody of the Bureau of

Corrections pending his advice-of-rights hearing.

Following his arrest, Sunil Sharma, Executive Chef and Partner of St. Thomas Social, disputed aspects of the case. He stated that the arrest stemmed from a 2024 banking deposit made by the establishment's former general manager.

According to Sharma, the deposit was a check for a private event rental at STT Social, "for which we do dozens a year." He stated that McClafferty "did not make the deposit in question, nor did he have any involvement with the client relating to the event." Sharma further said that the event was never hosted because "the check continuously bounced and the client subsequently passed away."

"Nonetheless, it is absurd that Social or its individual owners would be held responsible for deposits made in the course of ordinary business which exceeds 2 million dollars annually," Sharma stated. "Mr McClafferty committed no crime and we look forward to his prompt release from custody. He is represented by attorney Kye Walker."

Attorney Kye Walker later clarified her role in the matter during an interview on Sunday.

"As far as my official statement is, I do not represent Brett McLafferty in this matter. Nor would I ever advise a client to issue a press statement following an arrest, especially an arrest that has yet to be reported this soon."

The case remains pending before the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands. As with all criminal matters, the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.