

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Wayne James Will Stay In Prison Until Wednesday Awaiting Judge's Decision

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Wayne James taken into custody by Italian police. (Credit: Gazzetta Di Modena)

ST. THOMAS -- Should Wayne James be released from federal prison on bail pending the results of his case? Federal Judge Ruth Miller is giving Mr. James' attorney Michael Joseph until Wednesday to argue for the temporary release of his client, delaying her decision for Wednesday.

According to a federal indictment, while serving between 2009 and 2011 as chair of the Senate Committee on Youth, Education and Culture in the 28th Legislature, Mr. James

allegedly obtained tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars for the purpose of acquiring and translating historical documents related to the “Fireburn,” an 1878 uprising by freed slaves in St. Croix.

The indictment alleges that Mr. James submitted false documents to the Legislature and received cash advances in order to conduct historical research on behalf of the people of the Virgin Islands. Mr. James embezzled the cash advances for his own personal benefit instead of using them for the intended purposes, according to the indictment.

Mr. James, 55, was taken into custody by Italian police [late June](#), following an internationally warrant issued in October 2015 by the District Court of the Virgin Islands related to alleged wire fraud, document forgery and embezzlement.

At Monday's hearing the prosecution argued that Mr. James be held in prison because he was a flight risk; having no assets in the territory. But Mr. Joseph pushed back on behalf of his client, contending that Mr. James would stay and fight his case until an outcome was reached.

Also testifying on behalf of Mr. James was Public Works Commissioner Gustav James, the defendant's brother, who admitted that they had been in sparse communication.

According to The Gazzetta Di Modena, a venerable Italian newspaper, Mr. James, who once lived in the province of Pisa, sponsored an amateur football team in Italy. He was traced to an apartment in Nonantola, Italy, where he was a guest of some friends in the city of [Modena](#), and was intent on writing a book titled “Manly Manners”, which contains a chapter dedicated to traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena. Mr. James ran a [blog with the same title](#); his most recent blog post being June 21.

Mr. James was [extradited to the territory](#) last week.