

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman Receives Jail Time For Damaging Vehicle

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ST. THOMAS -- A 53-year-old woman who admitted to damaging a man's vehicle has been handed a one year prison sentence, V.I. Department of Justice Public Media Officer Corliss Smithen announced Thursday.

Mary Rivera of Est. Wintberg was arrested on a single charge of damaging a vehicle stemming from an Aug. 14, 2016 incident, during which she slashed a tire on her neighbor's car and removed the front license plate. Rivera accepted a plea deal proffered by Attorney General Claude Earl Walker and pleaded guilty to the offense.

Rivera stood before V.I. Superior Court Judge Renée Gumbs Carty on Thursday for her sentencing.

"It appears that you're a menace to this society," Gumbs Carty said as she chided Rivera. "You can't continue on this path of being irresponsible and doing nothing with your life, but causing trouble. Your behavior has to stop. You have no respect for the law," she added, referring to Rivera's lengthy criminal record, which dates back to 2010 and includes such charges as burglary and stalking.

Departing slightly from the terms of the plea agreement, which recommended a one-year suspended prison sentence, Gumbs Carty handed down her punishment of one year with Rivera serving nine months' incarceration, being placed on three months of supervised probation after her release from the Bureau of Corrections and paying court fees, fines and restitution to the victim. During her three-month probation, Rivera has to find a job and enter into a counseling program, Gumbs Carty further ordered.

A probable cause fact sheet prepared by Officer Ingrid Bukle stated that while the victim was inside his house taking a shower, he heard Rivera talking loudly and cursing. From his bathroom window, he could see Rivera walking around his vehicle several times. When the man later went outside to check his vehicle, he saw that three of his tire valve caps were missing, his right front tire was deflated and his front license plate was missing. When police arrived on the scene after the man reported the incident, Rivera told them that she deflated his tire and ripped off his front license plate because he was parked on her property, Bukle wrote.

Rivera who was free on bail pending her sentencing was immediately taken into custody to begin serving her prison term.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Stephanie Bowles.