

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Jailed For Six Months After Setting Ablaze Vehicle Of Female Victim

Crime / **Published On March 05, 2017 11:37 AM /**

Staff **March 05, 2017**



ST. THOMAS -- A man who pleaded guilty to arson was remanded to the Bureau of Corrections on Tuesday to begin serving his six-month prison term, V.I. Department of Justice Public Media Officer Corliss Smithen has announced.

V.I. Superior Court Judge Denise Francois sentenced James Nibbs, 40, above, to a three-year prison term with all but six months suspended and two and a half years of supervised probation. Judge Francois also ordered Nibbs to pay \$4,636 in restitution to the victim within nine months of his release from incarceration, as well as probation fees and court costs.

On Jan. 25, a jury was seated for Nibbs' trial and the prosecution had already presented its case in chief when Nibbs accepted a plea deal proffered by Attorney General Claude Earl Walker and pleaded guilty to the single count he faced – second-degree arson – in connection with a Dec. 28, 2015 incident. This was Nibbs' second trial. His first trial, which lasted Aug. 11 to 12, 2016, was declared a mistrial after the jury was deadlocked and could not reach a verdict.

Judge Francois accepted the guilty plea and set Feb. 28 as the date for Nibbs' sentencing.

Police arrested Nibbs on Jan. 21, 2016, after a woman reported that someone burned her vehicle.

According to an affidavit filed by police detective, Alex Dorsett, the victim told police that on Oct. 10, 2015, Nibbs left a message on her mobile phone that he wanted his money or else he would come and burn her vehicle. Then, on Dec. 8, 2015 at about 12:30 a.m., Nibbs went to the Mariel C. Newton Command and reported to a police officer that he just burned a vehicle in the Frydenhoj area. On that same day at about 6:30 a.m., the victim called 911 and reported that someone burnt her vehicle.

During Nibbs' arrest on Jan. 21, Dorsett played the voicemail recording that was left on the victim's cellular phone and Nibbs said, "I didn't mean the message; I was just upset at the time," Dorsett wrote in his affidavit.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Natasha Baker.