

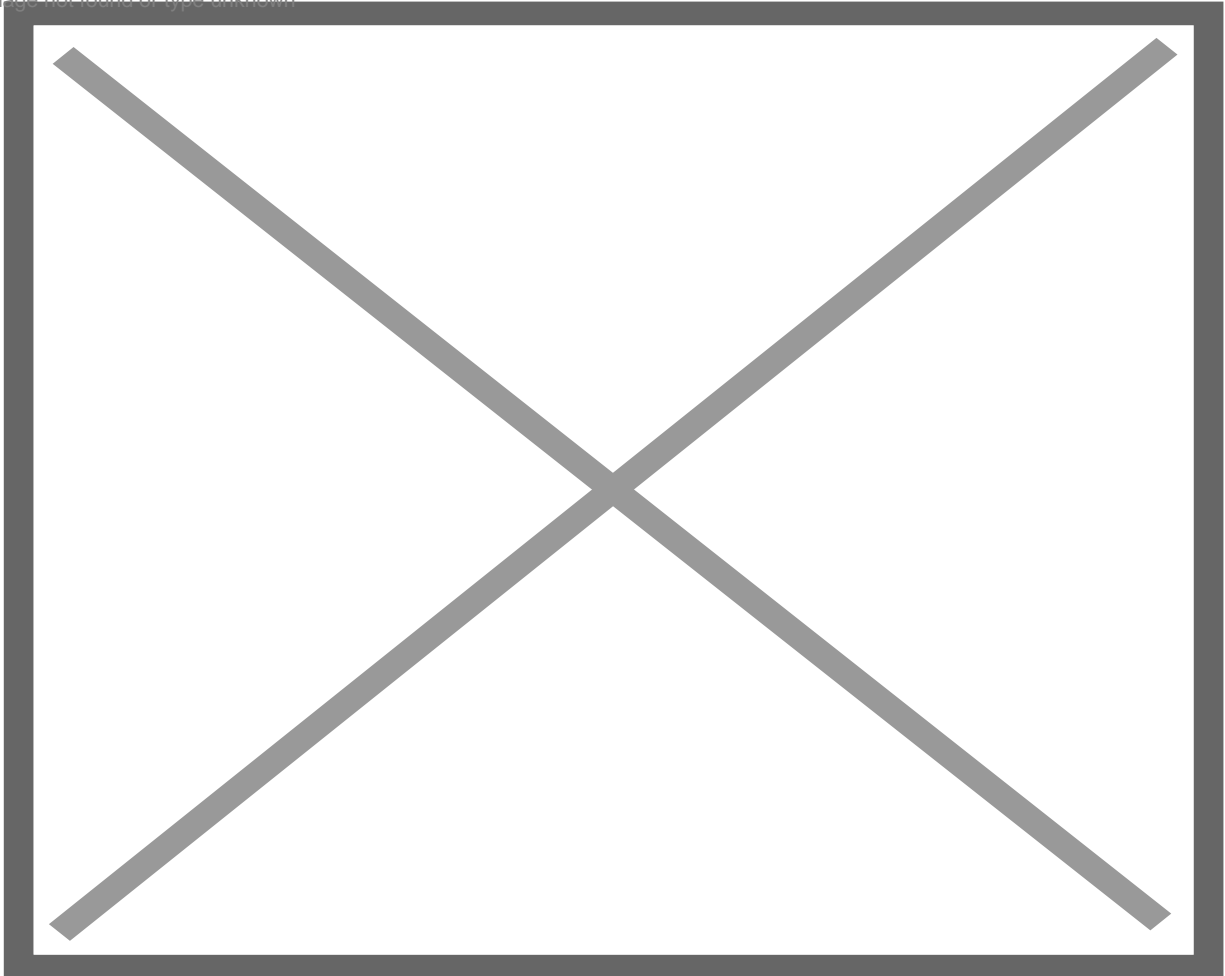
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Man Who Turned Himself in After Hit-and-Run Incident Said he Left Because He Was Afraid

Crime / **Published On June 12, 2021 07:28 AM /**

Kia Griffith **June 12, 2021**

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Mugshot of Rafael A. Ledesma German. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Rafael A. Ledesma German, a man from the Dominican Republic, was charged with leaving the scene of an accident and operating a vehicle without a valid license, following a hit-and-run collision that resulted in the death of 37-year-old Royson JnoBaptiste on St. Thomas.

German appeared before Judge Henry Carr via teleconference on Friday for his advisement hearing.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, on the eve of Sunday, June 6 between 9 and 10 pm, the suspect was driving eastward in the eastbound lane on Turpentine Run Road in the area of the

concrete plant. He was driving a maroon Acura SUV.

Video surveillance footage obtained by Sergeant C. Espirit from Irma Maria Bar and Restaurant showed that the now deceased victim, Mr. JnoBaptiste was struck by the front right of the vehicle when he ran toward the eastbound lane from the westbound lane into the path of the oncoming Acura. He became airborne and was launched eastward before landing on the roadway, the fact sheet explained.

Officer Quiozel Francis was notified of this incident at approximately 11:06 pm. Prior to police arriving on the scene, the victim was transported to the Schneider Regional Medical Center where he succumbed to his injuries at 10:43 pm.

Two days later on Tuesday, June 8 at approximately 10:05 am, German turned himself in to the Richard Callwood Command Police Station. When asked by Officer Francis why he left the scene, German said, "I left because I was afraid. I know people here have guns and they were drinking," according to the fact sheet.

"While he was charged with leaving the scene of an accident, he wasn't charged in connection with that accident with either negligence or reckless driving," Judge Carr stated to Assistant Attorney General John Barraco. This fact was confirmed by Attn. Barraco. It was then requested that German tell the court where he resides on island and whether he has documentation to be in the country.

German's attorney Treston E. Moore verified his client's physical address, said that he maintains employment, shared that German is legally in the country with a work visa, and elaborated on several details to substantiate his client's good character.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, the suspect was advised by legal counsel not to give a statement, nor provide the license plate number for the vehicle or share the location of the vehicle without counsel present. At Friday's hearing before the judge, Officer Francis requested the aforementioned information to complete his investigation, as "it's definitely an integral part of the whole investigation that we're able to process that vehicle," Officer Francis said.

Attn. Moore shared that his client was willing to provide that information on Friday.

Since [the last article posted by the Consortium](#), German posted bail of \$7,500 and was released prior to his advisement hearing. Conditions of his release were that he would surrender his original Dominican Republic passport, submit a copy of his work visa, and submit verification (lease or rent receipt) of his current residence by the close of business on Friday. A third-party custodian and curfew were not required.

Judge Carr also found probable cause for the following:

- Lotitia Donovan-Percel was charged with Simple Assault and Battery/ DV, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 299(2) and Title 16. V.I.C. Subsection 91(b)(1) & (2); and Disturbance of the Peace, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 622(1). Bail was set at \$500 (unsecured), so the \$1,000 Percel previously posted will be returned to her. She was advised to maintain employment with the VIPD and was prohibited from possessing a firearm.
- Vaughn Lee McHargue, a homeless man on St. Thomas, was charged with Burglary in the Third Degree, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 444(1) and Grand Larceny, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 1083(a)(1) in one case. He was charged with

Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 1382 and Possession of Stolen Property, in violation of Title 14. V.I.C. Subsection 2101(a). For both cases, a cumulative bail of \$25,000 (with the ability to post 10% or \$2,500) was set, and McHargue must remain in the St. Thomas/ St. John jurisdiction if released on bail. He cannot be released unless he has a suitable third-party custodian. If released, he will be subjected to a 6 pm to 6 am curfew, Mondays through Fridays, and house arrest on the weekends.