

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Steals Mercedes Benz From Car Wash, Ends Up In Four-Car Accident

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Taheem Hansen By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A man on St. Croix stole a Mercedes Benz and recklessly drove it in the middle of the roadway Wednesday, and was identified as the cause of a four-car accident. The suspect fled the scene of the accident but was later apprehended.

The suspect, Taheem Hansen, appeared before the Magistrate Judge Ernest Morris, Jr. via teleconference from the Bureau of Corrections on Friday for his advisement hearing.

Hansen was charged with the following: unauthorized use of a vehicle, grand larceny, second-degree reckless endangerment, and possession of stolen property.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, on Wednesday at about 12:07 pm, officers were discharged to investigate an unauthorized use of a vehicle that was stolen from the Noemi Car Wash and Tire Shop. The owner of the vehicle, a Mercedes Benz, was at the tire shop to replace a flat tire. When she exited the vehicle, she left the keys inside with the engine running and doors unlocked. Once she returned to the car, she was told that her vehicle left the parking area and travelled towards the Christiansted Bypass.

According to witness statements in the fact sheet, the Mercedes Benz traveled westbound on Contentment Road in the center of the road, hitting and pushing other vehicles off the road that were traveling west and eastbound. Witnesses also said that after the Benz came to a stop, the driver exited and fled the scene on foot.

Upon investigation of the matter, officers traveling along Contentment Road observed four damaged vehicles — including the Mercedes Benz that was stolen from the tire shop, the fact sheet said.

The suspect's identity was given to officers by the victim or owner of the Mercedes Benz. The victim observed him at the tire shop and identified him as a 5 ft. 6 in. tall man, chubby, with a low haircut, wearing a white t-shirt. Similar descriptions were given by two of the witnesses at the scene of the accident and by a witness at the tire shop as the man driving the Mercedes Benz, the fact sheet said.

According to Detective Salim Ross's sworn testimony before the court on Friday, a photo array including the suspect's photo was created and shown to witnesses who further confirmed Hansen as being the person who stole, drove, and fled the Mercedes-Benz.

Judge Morris ruled on the following conditions of release:

- Sign an unsecured bond of \$25,000
- Reside with third-party custodian
- No direct/ indirect contact with witnesses or victims
- Prohibited to leave the STX district without prior permission of the court
- 24-hour house arrest without electronic monitoring