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Driver of Vehicle With Men Who Robbed Jewelry Store in St. Thomas Pleads Guilty. He's Facing 20 Years in Prison.

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Gems & Gold Corner was robbed on Sept. 19, 2020 by masked men brandishing firearms. By. ALAMY

ST. THOMAS — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Monday that Jamari S. Benjamin, a resident of St. Thomas, appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller in the District Court and entered a guilty plea to the charge of conspiracy to rob the Gems and Gold Corner jewelry store located in St. Thomas. He faces up to twenty years in federal prison. The sentencing date will be set by the court.

According to court documents, on Saturday, September 19, 2020, a white Suzuki Vitara arrived in the area of Gems & Gold Corner jewelry store located on the waterfront near Veteran's Drive, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Benjamin was the driver of the white Suzuki Vitara. Two men wearing masks exited the white Suzuki Vitara with firearms and entered the Gems & Gold Corner jewelry store. The two masked men brandished the firearms and threatened the jewelry store employees and others. One of the masked men physically assaulted a jewelry store employee using the firearm, striking the employee's head. The two masked men broke the jewelry showcases and took jewelry from the store. They then retreated from the jewelry store, got back into the white Suzuki Vitara, and were driven away from the area by Benjamin.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Virgin Islands Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Juan A. Albino.

This case is part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhood Initiative. Project Safe Neighborhood is a nationwide initiative that brings together federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in a community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. For more information on the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods, please see: <https://www.justice.gov/psn>.

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