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Man Who Struggled With Airport Police Over Mandatory Covid-19 Screening Arrested

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A mugshot of Elvis Fredericks was not provided at time of publication. Above, the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — A man has been slapped with multiple charges after refusing to submit to mandatory Covid-19 screening at the Cyril E King Airport.

Elvis Fredericks was arrested on November 18th after a soldier of the National Guard requested an officer's assistance in reference to a passenger who refused to comply with Covid-19 screening. According to the probable cause fact sheet, the soldier stated that Fredericks went to the first station but skipped two stations and proceeded to baggage claim. Two soldiers then located him and advised him to the return to the checkpoint to be screened before proceeding. However,

Fredericks replied, “Tell them I already visually check from the first step and I’m not going back. Tell them to [expletive] off.” The V.I. National Guard soldiers then made contact with a V.I. Port Authority security monitor, who then dispatched an officer to the scene.

When the officer made contact with Fredericks and once again advised him of the need to complete the screening process, Fredericks reportedly replied, “Big man I already showed them my QR code, you need to leave me alone.”

Despite being instructed a third time, the passenger reportedly ignored the officer’s directives and attempted to proceed through the exit. While the officer stood in his way to block his exit, Fredericks pushed him away and stated “move out of my [expletive] way,” before also pushing a second officer who intervened. The officers then tried to escort him through baggage claim but he actively resisted by pushing and pulling away. He was eventually subdued to the ground and handcuffed before being escorted to a police patrol where he refused to enter the vehicle, pushing and kicking at the door to prevent it from closing.

Fredericks later refused to take a mandatory Covid-19 test after being transported to the hospital as part of the booking requirements. The fact sheet alleges that when officers opened the police vehicle they found him lying on the seat with his feet pointing towards the officer, stating “I should just kick this [expletive] door into you.” A nurse was subsequently summoned to conduct the test outside before Fredericks could be transported to the police station to be processed. He later posted bail in the amount of \$1,000 and was released until his advisement hearing on Friday.

Appearing for the people, Assistant Attorney General Brenda Scales noted that the defendant has two prior instances of conflict with the law, including a 2018 conviction for possession of stolen property, escape from custody and vehicle tampering. While Scales suggested that a curfew may be worth considering as part of his release conditions, public defender Julie Todman and Judge Henry Carr both disagreed. Todman asked that the bail amount continue as posted, a condition which the judge agreed with. The judge emphasized that as part of his other bail conditions, Fredericks is prohibited from having contact with any victims or witnesses in the matter and is required to submit his passport.

Fredericks is charged with aggravated assault and battery upon an officer which carries a maximum fine of \$500, a maximum incarceration of 1 year, or both. He is additionally charged with interfering with an officer discharging his duties and disobeying a lawful order, both punishable by a fine of up to \$1000, a prison sentence not exceeding 1 year, or both.