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Man Allegedly Steals Rental Car, Totals It During Accident

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ST. JOHN — Police have arrested and charged a man who allegedly totaled a vehicle that he took from a rental company without permission.

Kevin Jostes is charged with unauthorized use of a vehicle and damaging or tampering with a vehicle. The first charge carries a maximum imprisonment of 5 years while the second is punishable by up to 1 year behind bars.

According to police, the manager of a car rental company in Cruz Bay reported that a Jeep Wrangler registered to the business was stolen on Wednesday, March 16th. It was later discovered totaled on the roadway in the Coral Bay area. The probable cause fact sheet states that the manager was notified that one of the company vehicles was on a wrecker truck and when he

traveled to the business he discovered that one of the jeeps was missing from where it was parked the previous day. He then reviewed surveillance footage which reportedly showed Kevin Jostes walking onto the property around 1:30 a.m. and entering a vehicle left there by a guest. The video also shows Jostes walking around the property and entering another vehicle which he then drove off in.

According to the fact sheet, the manager recognized the suspect from seeing him in the downtown area and confirmed to police that he had never given him permission to be in possession of the vehicle.

Several patrol officers were reportedly shown the footage and they immediately recognized Jostes from the downtown area as well. Investigations later revealed that he was involved in an auto collision where he flipped and totaled the vehicle valued at approximately \$34,000. Officers made contact with the accused just over a week later on Thursday afternoon and he was taken in for questioning. However, he was described as uncooperative, declining to provide police with any information, according to the fact sheet. The fact sheet further states that a police sergeant was able to obtain his name based on a prior arrest report from the United States.

While bail was initially set at \$25,000, Jostes appeared for a hearing on Friday where the Assistant V.I. Attorney General requested an increase to \$100,000. Brenda Scales emphasized that the defendant did not cooperate with the booking process and that the court knows nothing about him as he refused to verify his identity. Meanwhile, public defender Mary Ann Matney explained that Jostes is currently homeless and previously lived on the beach in Cruz Bay. She asked that he be released on an unsecured bond, asserting that he was not a danger to the community and that he has only been employed for two months installing solar panels.

The judge eventually ruled that bail would be set at \$50,000 with no 10 percent provision. She expressed concern over how the defendant would be located for future court proceedings as the court could not confirm his identity, a fixed address, or his place of employment. The judge also suggested that Jostes does indeed pose a danger to the community based on the allegations that he was involved in an auto collision. While the matter remains pending, Kevin Jostes is prohibited from going to the premises of the rental company and is strictly forbidden from having any contact with its employees.