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Teens Arrested in Connection With Burglary Incidents and Matter Involving Vehicle Stolen From Tourist

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From left to right, mugshots of Jamari Gumbs and Savianna Charles. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Police have arrested two teens in connection with two separate burglaries and a matter involving a vehicle stolen from a tourist.

Jamari Gumbs, 18 is facing several charges in connection with what a judge has described as a “string” of crimes. Also facing charges is 18-year-old Savianna Charles.

The first incident occurred on the afternoon of April 5th, when a homeowner in Smith Bay returned from running errands, only to discover that his home had been burglarized. According to the probable cause fact sheet, investigations revealed that the intruder or intruders had tampered

with the front door and forcefully gained entry. They appeared to have ransacked two bedrooms and removed several items including an airsoft gun, a gold chain, watches and sex toys, according to the fact sheet. A review of surveillance footage from the neighborhood showed a dark-colored Kia Forte outside the burglarized residence. However, according to police, the plates were unknown at the time.

Days later on April 8th, a rental vehicle was reported stolen from a tourist on Hull Bay Beach. The individual stated that they had locked and secured the rented Jeep, leaving the key inside a personal bag they left on the beach. After returning from a brief swim they found their bag missing along with the vehicle keys, cash, wallet, and a purse. The remaining contents of the bag were reportedly thrown about in nearby bushes.

Surveillance footage obtained by police revealed a vehicle that matched the Kia Forte seen outside of the home that was burglarized on April 5th. The footage showed that the Kia Forte was parked in the immediate vicinity of the Jeep and left minutes before the Jeep was stolen. This time the license plate was visible and officers put out a bulletin for the vehicle. They later discovered that it had been rented by a woman on April 1st and was scheduled to be returned on April 2nd.

Also on April 8th, police were summoned to a residence in Estate St. Peter where the home of an elderly female was burglarized while she was asleep. Among the items stolen were cash and jewelry. Later that evening, police spotted the dark Kia Forte which they had seen on surveillance footage in the two prior incidents. It was stopped in the parking lot of a gas station and Jamari Gumbs and another male individual were inside at the time.

Upon making contact with the occupants, it was confirmed that the vehicle was rented by a woman who was also on the scene. She then gave the police written consent to search the vehicle. That search revealed approximately \$1,360 in cash, as well as a small Smith and Wesson air gun, an airsoft gun, clothing and a car key. Police also discovered earrings matching the description of those stolen from the elderly woman's house earlier that day. According to the probable cause fact sheet, police also found a substance that later tested positive for marijuana and another white substance that proved to be a narcotic. Police would later discover the Jeep that had been stolen at the beach and the key recovered from the Kia Forte was able to open the stolen Jeep.

According to police, the woman who had rented the Kia Forte was adamant that she had been in possession of the vehicle since renting it and that she had been with Gumbs all day on April 8th, riding around in the vehicle. The other individual who was found in the vehicle reportedly stated that he had no knowledge of the incidents that police were investigating. He stated that he had not been in the vehicle at the time of said incidents. Jamari Gumbs was later charged with third-degree burglary, unauthorized use of a vehicle, possession of stolen property, second-degree burglary, and destruction of property.

At his advisement hearing on Monday, the judge noted that Gumbs has other pending criminal matters against him. She asserted that she views him as a danger to the community as it relates to stealing and not respecting the property rights of others. As a result, his bail has been set at \$30,000 with no 10 percent provision. If Gumbs is able to make bail, he will be placed on a curfew on weekdays and 24-hour house arrest on weekends.

Savianna Charles, who rented the vehicle in her name and asserted that she had been in possession of it the entire time, is also facing the same charges as Gumbs. She appeared for an advisement hearing on Friday and the judge agreed that she could be released on the posting of \$500 cash. She will be released into the care of a third-party custodian and will be required to abide by a 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew. According to the judge, these conditions were set based on the

defendant's ties to the community as well as the fact that this is her first brush with the law, and she is not considered a flight risk.

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