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Men Arrested After Allegedly Cashing 12 Counterfeit Checks Totaling \$22K Using Dept. of Labor Account Information

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From left to right, Mugshots of D’Jor Baptiste and Myles Arnold. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — Two men were arrested Thursday for allegedly counterfeiting a total of twelve checks and depositing them in their personal accounts using information belonging to the V.I. Dept. of Labor.

According to V.I.P.D. Director of Communications Glen Dratte, on Thursday, June 23 detectives from the Economic Crimes Unit initiated an investigation after a complaint was received by D.O.L.’s St. Thomas branch. The investigation revealed that the twelve checks totaled \$22,643.07.

Evidence showed that 25-year-old D'Jor Baptiste deposited one check in the amount of \$3,331.19 into his personal bank account, while 23-year-old Myles Arnold cashed two checks in the amount of \$8,438.64. An additional \$10,873.24 was cashed by another suspect, according to the V.I.P.D.

On Thursday at about 9:12 a.m., detectives from the Economic Crimes Unit executed an arrest warrant at a residence in Estate Whim where Baptiste was placed under arrest without incident. Baptiste was charged with uttering or passing forged or counterfeit matters, obtaining money by false pretense, grand larceny, possession of forged bills or notes, forgery, and fraudulent claims upon the government.

His bail was set at \$20,000, and Baptiste was granted release by Magistrate Judge Yolán Brow Ross upon the posting of 10 percent of the total. Baptiste was ordered to be present for his advisement hearing scheduled for Friday, July 1 at the V.I. Superior Court.

Also on Thursday, detectives from the Economic Crimes Unit executed an arrest warrant at about 12:34 p.m. at a residence in Estate Glynn, where Arnold was placed under arrest without incident. Arnold was charged with uttering or passing forged or counterfeit matters, obtaining money by false pretense, grand larceny, possession of forged bills or notes, forgery, and fraudulent claims upon the government.

Unable to post bail of \$20,000, Arnold was remanded to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advisement hearing scheduled for today at the V.I. Superior Court.

Baptiste appeared before judge Yolán Brow Ross on Friday and she agreed that the defendant will continue his release upon his previous posting of \$2,000. His attorney argued that due to the nature of the offense, a third-party custodian was not necessary. The judge agreed to this. Baptiste has been ordered to surrender his passport to the court and is prohibited from leaving the jurisdiction while this matter remains pending. He has also been ordered to have no direct or indirect contact with any witnesses in this matter.

Meanwhile, Arnold also appeared before the same judge and was allowed release upon the posting of \$1,000 cash, but with stricter bail conditions. The judge noted that Arnold has another criminal matter pending which predates the current charges. He will be released into the third-party custody of a relative and will be subjected to a 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. daily curfew.

The judge has ordered Arnold to undertake a work search, which was also a condition of release in his prior matter. Judge Brow Ross urged the defendant to look for a means of earning legitimate money so that he may be able to financially assist his sick third-party custodian who he currently helps to care for. The judge has ordered that there be no contact between Baptiste and Arnold.