

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Arrested For DUI Following Accident in St. Thomas

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Mugshot of Joel Benjamin. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man appeared before a judge at the V.I. Superior Court on Monday after being arrested for driving under the influence, among other charges.

Joel Benjamin was recently arrested for DUE, operating a vehicle with an illegal blood alcohol content and negligent driving.

His arrest follows a report on September 30 of an auto collision at the intersection of Emile Francis Drive and Tabor and Harmony Road in St. Thomas.

Upon officers' arrival to the scene, contact was made with one of the drivers in the accident who was positively identified as the operator of a black Toyota Tacoma. The operator of the silver Dodge Durango left the scene prior to the officer's arrival to use the bathroom. Upon his return to the scene, Joel Benjamin was positively identified as the operator of the Dodge.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, as Benjamin walked towards the officer, the officer observed that he had a difficult time walking and was using a cane. Benjamin stated that he had difficulty due to a medical condition. While conducting his investigation, the officer smelled an odor of alcohol emanating from Benjamin's breath. Benjamin stated that he had consumed two Coors Light beers prior to operating his vehicle, however upon further questioning, he stated that he only had one drink.

Benjamin failed the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus test as he was unable to keep track of the stimulus with his eyes. He was then transported to the Traffic Investigation Bureau to conduct the rest of the tests because the roadway was dimly lit and there wasn't enough level roadway in the area.

At the Bureau, an intoximeter test was conducted on Benjamin which registered his blood alcohol content at .156 percent — much higher than the legal alcohol blood count 0.008 percent.

Investigations revealed that Benjamin was traveling southwestward while the operator of the Toyota Tacoma was traveling northeastward. Benjamin attempted to make a right turn on Tabor and Harmony Road. While doing so, the right front side of his vehicle collided into the right side of the Tacoma, causing an auto collision with damages.

In court on Monday, the judge ruled that Benjamin's posting of the full amount of his \$1,000 bail requirement would be sufficient for his continued release. While the matter is pending, he is not permitted to leave St. Thomas/St. John without written authorization from the court and must report to the Office of Probation once a week. He has also been prohibited from consuming alcohol or possessing a firearm or ammunition.

Benjamin was ordered to surrender his driver's license at his arraignment hearing on October 21, 2022 and will be barred from driving for 90 days.