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SUV Parked With Keys Inside Reported Stolen; Suspect Found Days Later Wearing Clothing Left in Vehicle

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Mugshot of Kevin Jostes. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — An alleged car thief appeared before the courts on Monday after reportedly stealing an SUV whose driver had forgotten the keys inside.

Last Friday, March 10, a man reported to police that he was heading east on Krum Bay Road near the Gottlieb Gas Station shortly after 1:00 p.m. when, to his surprise, he saw his 2008 Acura RDX parked near one of the gas pumps, with a man later identified as Kevin Jostes sitting inside.

The man says he turned in to the gas station, parked in front of his stolen vehicle, and called a friend to meet him. He then approached Jostes and asked where he got the Acura from, to which the car thief reportedly replied “from a dead man in the grave.”

The complainant said he noted that the sneakers Jostes was wearing seemed to be ones belonging to the friend that had been called for assistance. The man asked Jostes to hand over the keys but instead, Jostes reportedly hurried around the vehicle, went inside and sat in the driver’s seat. Jostes then turned on the vehicle and attempted to put it in drive but the rightful owner reportedly placed his hand through the window of the SUV, held Jostes’ hand and placed the vehicle back in park, while his friend who had since arrived on scene held Jostes’ other hand through the passenger side door, preventing him from fleeing.

The owner then removed the keys from the ignition and the two men then wrestled Jostes out of the vehicle. According to documents presented in court, during the struggle, Jostes allegedly punched the man’s friend multiple times, which resulted in a fight between the three of them.

After disengaging from the struggle, Jostes then reportedly walked away while the complainant called 911. When a port police officer arrived at the gas station, Jostes attempted to flee but was captured.

Investigations revealed that the complainant’s friend had borrowed the vehicle in question on March 9th, and left it in the parking lot of the Blyden Memorial Chapel Church, forgetting the keys inside. The friend told police that he had fallen asleep inside his office and when he awoke the following day to find the Acura missing, he panicked. He called his uncle for advice, he says, who told him to report the matter to police.

A vehicle registration check confirmed that the SUV, which was missing one of its assigned license plates, was in fact registered to the complainant. Some of the clothing Jostes was wearing at the time of the incident was found to have come from the friend’s suitcase, which had been reportedly been in the trunk at the time the Acura was taken.

Kevin Jostes was arrested and charged with unauthorized use of a vehicle, possession of stolen property and interfering with an officer.

In court on Monday, a judge ruled that Jostes’s \$10,000 bail requirement be fully secured. He is barred from leaving the St. Thomas- St. John district without the court’s written permission. He must physically report to probation once a week and not obtain a passport while on release. He is to stay at least 50 ft away from the victim. Jostes is prohibited from abusing alcohol or any controlled substances as well as possessing a firearm, ammunition or dangerous weapon. A psychological evaluation has also been ordered for Jostes.