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Man Charged With Arson After Allegedly Setting Woman's Vehicle on Fire

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Mugshot of Elvis Stapleton. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A man appeared before the V.I. Superior Court on Friday after allegedly setting a woman's vehicle on fire.

On March 16, police met with a woman who reported to them that when she got home at 3:30 p.m. that day, she met Elvis Stapleton who seemed agitated, silently pacing in the roadway with a hammer in his hand.

The woman told police that she ignored Stapleton and went inside, but subsequently looked outside and noticed that he was using the hammer to remove the hubcaps off of all the tires of her vehicle. He then stood in front of her vehicle which prompted her to go outside to tell him to not

hit her vehicle.

According to documents presented in court, Stapleton darted past the woman through the open door and into her house. He reportedly grabbed a gasoline bottle, returned outside and began pouring the gasoline on the vehicle. He then lit the front of the woman's vehicle on fire with a lighter he had in his possession. After setting the vehicle ablaze, the alleged arsonist took off running down the street while the woman dashed inside to grab a bucket of water to extinguish the fire.

When police arrived on scene they saw the woman's 2016 Nissan Rogue with burns to its hood and grill. The plastic barrier under the hood had melted from the heat. The hubcaps were on the ground next to the woman's car tires. When police met with Stapleton, he said that he couldn't remember what had happened, reportedly telling the arresting officer, "something wrong with my head." He was placed under arrest and charged with second-degree arson, damaging a vehicle and unlawful entry.

Stapleton appeared in court on the morning of Friday March 17 for his advice of rights hearing, however the details of his pre-trial release conditions had not been uploaded by the court at time of publication. The court has decided to stop providing Zoom links to the media, based on a directive from Presiding Judge Debra Watlington, according to Tamara Charles, clerk of the V.I. Superior Court.