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Fight Over Woman Results in Arrests of St. Thomas Men

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Janeka Simon **May 12, 2023**

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From left to right, mugshots of Akeam Johnson and Rashim Richards. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — Two men arrested on Tuesday morning after fighting over a woman are now facing assault charges in court.

Just before 7:30 on May 9, officers were dispatched to Gardinia Street in Bovoni Homes following a report of a fight in progress. Central Dispatch told the responding officers that a man was trying to get a stone to damage someone's vehicle while a woman screamed and glass shattered in the background. Dispatch also informed the officers that the woman had run to hide in the front yard of a law enforcement officer who lived in the area while the man with the stone was

driving around in a black Acura TSX looking for the woman who had fled.

Police found the man in question near the officer's residence, and identified him as Akeam Johnson. He and his girlfriend, Johnson said, had been taking a break from their relationship after arguing for about a week. That Tuesday morning, he told officers that he was at his girlfriend's house to give her a ride to work as he usually did, when he saw her arriving at the residence in a vehicle driven by another man. He said she jumped back into the vehicle when he approached and drove away, returning shortly thereafter.

Once they returned, Johnson said that he drove towards them to confront his girlfriend, and he and the other man – Rashim Richards – began to argue over the woman. Johnson claims that Richards tried to knock him over with his car, prompting Johnson to jump out of the way. Richards then rushed towards Johnson with the machete, Johnson said, which struck Johnson on his left forearm as he raised his hand to block Richard's strike.

Johnson said he took the blow, wrested control of the weapon from Richards, and swung at him while the now-disarmed man retaliated by throwing rocks, which reportedly missed. Under Johnson's flurry of machete blows, Richards eventually retreated to his vehicle and sped away, while the woman at the center of the dispute ran down the street screaming. Johnson told police that he did not know where on Richard's body his machete blows landed.

Police also spoke with the woman involved, who confirmed that she had arrived at her home with Richards when she saw Johnson nearby, so decided to leave and return. The woman said that as she approached her gate for the second time, Johnson drove up and blocked Richards's egress with his car. She ran back to the vehicle and jumped in through the driver's side, she said, while the men began to argue. Johnson reportedly picked up three rocks, throwing one at the windshield and the second at the driver's side window, smashing the glass.

Richards, said the woman, collided into the fence in an attempt to drive away while avoiding Johnson's vehicle, which was still blocking the roadway. She recounted Johnson opening the door and struggling for control of the machete with Richards, although she said she did not know whose weapon it was. The woman told police that she ran out of the vehicle and down the road, with Johnson giving chase. She tripped, and while her boyfriend stood over her, the woman said she grabbed the blade of the machete to prevent him from striking her with it. Instead, he reportedly turned his attention back to Richards, hitting him with the weapon. The woman said that's when she ran to the officer's house and hid behind some barrels in the yard.

That officer informed police that Richards had been seen trying to make his way to the Schneider Regional Medical Center, which is where the investigating officer found him. He corroborated the version of events told by Johnson's girlfriend, and told police that he reached for his machete because Johnson, who is known to carry a firearm, was reaching into his pocket during the initial confrontation at Richards's vehicle.

Police noted several bruises on Johnson's face and a laceration on his left forearm. Richards had sustained several lacerations concentrated on his upper body, neck and head, while the woman had cuts and bruises on her arms and legs, including a cut on the palm of her left hand.

Both men were arrested, with Akeam Johnson being charged with first and third-degree assault, possessing a dangerous weapon during a crime of violence, mayhem, destruction of property, and damaging a vehicle. Rashim Richards, meanwhile, was charged with third-degree assault and possessing a dangerous weapon during a crime of violence.

Both men were scheduled to appear in court on Friday May 12 for their advice of rights hearing. As of press time, the outcome of their first court hearing had not been uploaded to the court's public access online portal.

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