



## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

“To Protect and Serve”

### Office of the Commissioner

**VIPD NEWS RELEASE - 082423-276**

**For Immediate Media Distribution**

---

#### **ECU Arrest Mother and Daughter on Fraud and Theft Charges**

**St. Croix, U.S.V.I.** - On April 13, 2023, the Economic Crimes Unit initiated an investigation into an Obtaining Money by False Pretense complaint. Their investigation revealed that Sylvia Benjamin knowingly gained access to the complaint's Banco Popular Visa debit card information and shared same with her daughter Leah Benjamin, without his knowledge or permission, to defraud him. They both conducted several fraudulent and unauthorized online transactions totaling \$2,420.29. Leah Benjamin was observed on surveillance retrieving some of the merchandise. Evidence showed that packages were delivered to Leah's address, utilities bills were also paid on both suspects' addresses.

After Sylvia Benjamin was notified that an arrest warrant was obtained for her arrest in reference to the incident, on August 24, 2023, Benjamin, 43, surrendered herself at the Wilbur H. Francis Command Police Station, where she was served the arrest warrant, advised of her Miranda Rights, and placed under arrest without incident. Sylvia Benjamin was transported to the Police Operation Building, where she was subsequently, booked and charged with Obtaining Money by False Pretenses, Grand Larceny, and Access to Computers for Fraudulent Purposes.

Based on the incident, bail was set at \$20,000.00 dollars for the alleged incident. Unable to post bail, Sylvia Benjamin was remanded to the John A. Bell Adult Correction Facility pending her Advice of Rights Hearing.

On August 25, 2023, the Virgin Islands Police Department received a tip from a concerned citizen stating that Leah Benjamin was seen at the Henry E. Rohlsen airport. Detectives from the Economic Crimes Unit traveled to the Henry E. Rohlsen airport where Leah Benjamin, 23, was served the arrest warrant, advised of her Miranda Rights, and placed under arrest without incident. Leah Benjamin was transported to the Police Operation Building, where she was subsequently booked and charged with Obtaining Money by False Pretenses, Grand Larceny, and Access to Computers for Fraudulent Purposes.

Leah Benjamin's bail was \$20,000.00, however her bail was reduced, permitting her to post \$500.00. She was released under the supervision of a third-party custodian pending her Advice of Rights Hearing scheduled for Monday, August 27, 2023, at the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.

###

**AAF Justice Complex, 5400 Veterans Drive St. Thomas, 00802 \* (340) 774-2211**  
**Administrative Services Building 45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted St. Croix, 00840 \* (340) 778-2211**

[www.vipd.vi.gov](http://www.vipd.vi.gov)