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Man Accused Of Strangling Wife At Business They Co-Own Now Facing Felony Assault Charges

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Mugshot of Rasheen St. Juste. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS – A man accused of assaulting his wife hours after a court issued a reciprocal restraining order now faces felony domestic violence charges.

According to court documents, on the morning of September 9, a woman came to the VIPD's Domestic Violence Unit to provide a statement in reference to an assault by her husband days earlier at the business they co-own. She said that they had been to court on Thursday, September 7 over an application for a restraining order filed by her husband, Rasheen St. Juste. The court reportedly granted a reciprocal restraining order, binding both parties.

The woman said that later in the day, she went to the lounge that the couple jointly own to prepare the establishment for business as she usually does. Her husband was there, and reportedly asked her to leave repeatedly. When she asserted her right to be there as joint owner, he reportedly went up to her and poured beer over her. That's when she called 911, the woman told police, asking that officers be dispatched to her location.

The call reportedly enraged Mr. St. Juste, the woman said. He began cursing and calling her derogatory names, she told officers, recounting how he approached her as she sat on a couch waiting for police to arrive. The woman said that her husband told her to "count her days" before placing his hands around her neck, squeezing so tightly that her breathing was restricted. She fought back, pushing and kicking Mr. St. Juste, but the woman said that her husband overpowered her, and she fell to the floor, with his hands still around her throat.

The woman told police that Mr. St. Juste kissed her on the cheek shortly after she fell, released his grip on her throat, and again advised her to count her days. She immediately fled the place when she was able to regain her footing, and went directly to the Richard Callwood Command to file a report.

She further told police that assaults by her husband have occurred several times in the past, but she had documented them privately instead of reporting the incidents to the police. On this occasion, police noted abrasions to the woman's neck, chest, back and right thigh, however she declined medical attention.

Police say their investigations have revealed that the cameras were disconnected from the business place at some point prior to the incident, and they also have information to suggest that this is an "ongoing situation between both parties," according to documents submitted to the court.

Rasheen St. Juste presented himself to officers of the Domestic Violence Unit on Tuesday afternoon, but declined to give a statement. He was arrested and charged with second-degree assault and simple assault as crimes of domestic violence, as well as disturbance of the peace. He was then remanded to the Bureau of Corrections to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Wednesday before Magistrate Paula Norkaitis, Mr. St. Juste was offered pre-trial release with a cash component of \$1000. Other bail and bond conditions attached to his release ahead of trial were not immediately available as of press time.

His next court appearance is scheduled for September 29.