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## Woman Who Punched Cousin in Presence of Police Tased, Arrested and Charged With Assault

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**Mugshot of Martha Melendez. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.**

ST. CROIX — A woman who was tased after punching another woman in the presence of police now faces felony assault charges before the court.

According to court documents, on Thursday, police responded to an apartment in the Lorraine Village complex following a report of a physical disturbance in progress. Officers met with a woman who had visible scratches and bruises on her neck. She pointed towards Building 11 and said that the woman who choked her was inside one of those units. As she did so, another woman – later identified as Martha Melendez – rushed out of Building 11 and reportedly told the complainant that she would prove that she was not afraid of police. Then, Melendez reportedly

threw a punch which connected with the other woman's face, on the left side. As the women grappled with each other, one officer deployed his taser, missing the first time but connected with Melendez the second time, following which she immediately fell to the ground.

Officers were then able to handcuff and restrain her without further incident.

With the attack halted, police returned to questioning the complainant, who said that she and Melendez are cousins who live in the apartment together. The dispute began when the woman said she unplugged a fan that Melendez had bought. Melendez reportedly broke the fan, slammed her cousin's head into a wall, and then began to strangle her, cutting off the woman's airway. The woman said she fought back until she was able to break free.

Emergency medical technicians transported the woman, who was complaining of pain to her neck, to the Juan F. Luis Hospital for medical treatment, which included the removal of a taser prong.

Melendez, who initially refused medical assistance, was taken to the Wilbur H. Francis Command police station, where she told officers that she had been sleeping when her cousin unplugged the fan and bit her. Melendez claimed that the other woman had punched her repeatedly before running outside and calling the police. Further, she claimed that her cousin had threatened to kill her and the children, and set the apartment on fire with the minors inside.

Nevertheless, Melendez was arrested and charged with second-degree assault and simple assault and battery, both as crimes of domestic violence. She was also charged with disturbance of the peace and remanded into custody to await her first court appearance.

In court on Friday, Magistrate Yolan Brow Ross found probable cause to uphold the charges against Martha Melendez, and set bail at \$1000, with a 10 percent plus \$1 cash provision, which was paid. Her next court appearance is scheduled for October 18.