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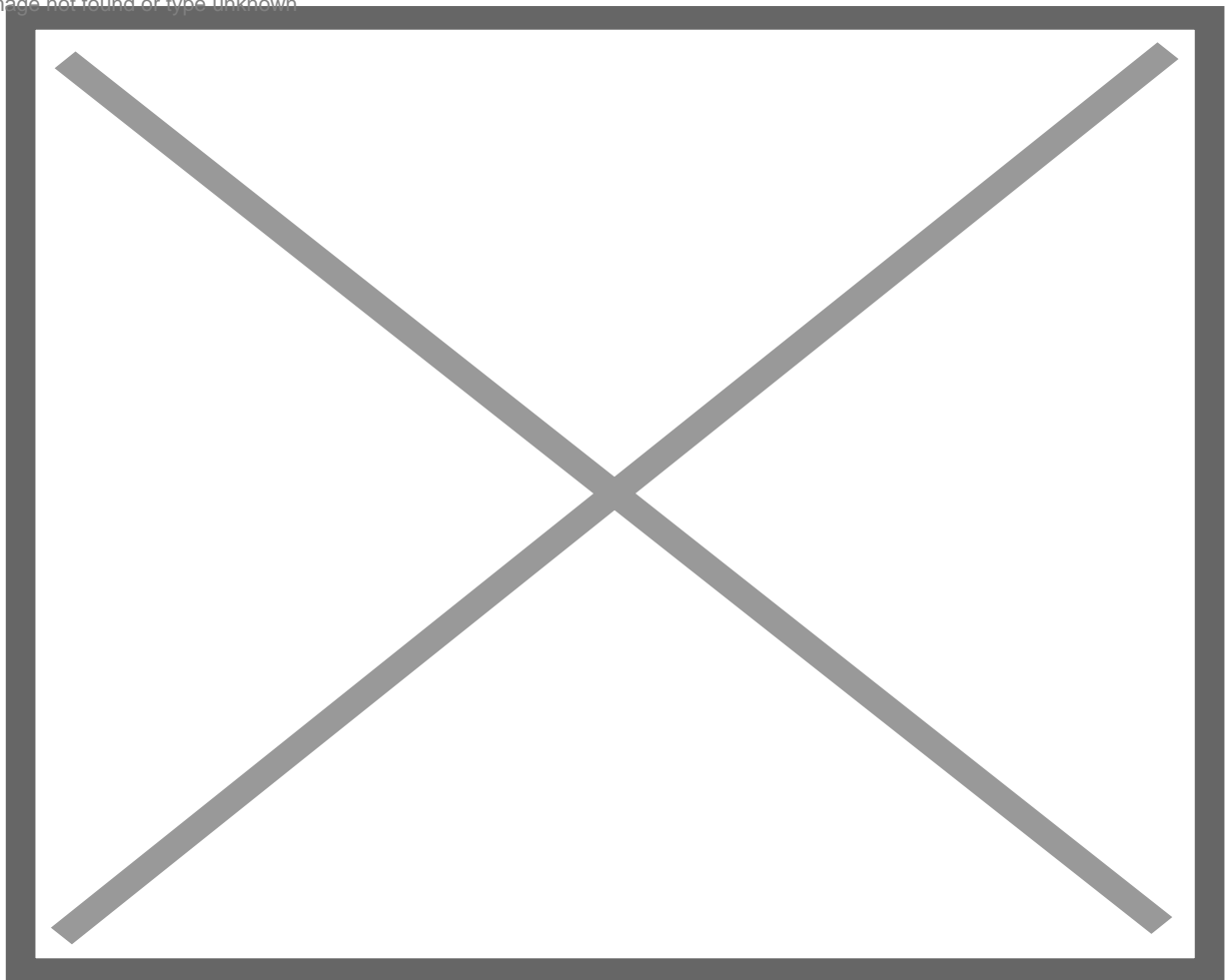
# Mother's Boyfriend Faces Assault Charges for Alleged Sexual Advances Toward Young Girl

**Minor child reports man's attempt to kiss her while she slept, recounts further incidents alone in house and inappropriate conduct at a beach**

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Janeke Simon **November 14, 2023**

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**Mugshot of Luis Santiago. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

ST. CROIX — A man who allegedly tried to kiss his girlfriend's daughter as she tried to sleep must now answer to charges of sexual assault.

Last Tuesday, a man reported to police that his 12-year old daughter had complained about her mother's boyfriend. The girl reportedly told her father that Luis Santiago, who lives with the woman and her three children, had come into her bedroom a few nights prior while her mother slept in the other room.

The man told police that his daughter recounted how Santiago lay on top of her in the darkened bedroom and tried to kiss her multiple times. She reportedly pushed him off, but he kept trying until she said she would tell her father. Then, Santiago reportedly claimed to have been trying to tell her goodnight.

After his daughter recounted the experience, the man told police that he took her to her mother and asked her to repeat the story. However, the woman reportedly asked her daughter to "hush," saying that Santiago was in the residence. That's when the concerned father went to police, showing them text messages where the mother reportedly promised to keep a close eye on her lover, and also promised financial assistance, reportedly implying the assistance was conditioned on the aggrieved father not causing the family "any trouble."

Police spoke to the girl herself the following day, and she told them much the same story she told her father. She said that Santiago had held her hands behind her back when he came into her bed, and recounted turning her face to the side to avoid his attempt to kiss her on the mouth. The 12-year old girl told police that her mother's boyfriend had promised her an iPhone as he continued to try to kiss her, but said that she kept moving her face to avoid his overtures, and once she was able to free her hands from his grasp, kept pushing him away until he eventually got up.

The girl told police of two previous times Santiago had been inappropriate with her – once about a month ago where he unsuccessfully tried to kiss her when they were both in the house, and another time where he picked her up out of the water while at the beach, and then reportedly tried to move his hand down her back. She said that on that occasion, she pushed his hand away before it reached her buttocks. This was the first time she was speaking up about Santiago's assaults, the pre-teen told officers.

After initially trying and failing to make contact with either Santiago or the girl's mother, police alerted social workers to the child's claims and issued an all-points bulletin for Santiago's arrest. He turned himself in on November 12, and in a statement given to police before his arrest he denied all the allegations, saying that he does not go into the girl's bedroom and does not associate with her or her siblings. Santiago speculated that the girl's father convinced her to make the statement.

He was then arrested and charged with simple assault and battery as a crime of domestic violence, as well as first-degree attempted unlawful sexual contact.

As of press time, there is no information about the outcome of Santiago's advice of rights hearing on Monday, before Magistrate Ernest Morris Jr. However, part of Santiago's pre-trial release conditions included a \$1000 cash component of his bail, which was paid.

His next court appearance is scheduled for November 29.