

logo not found or type unknown

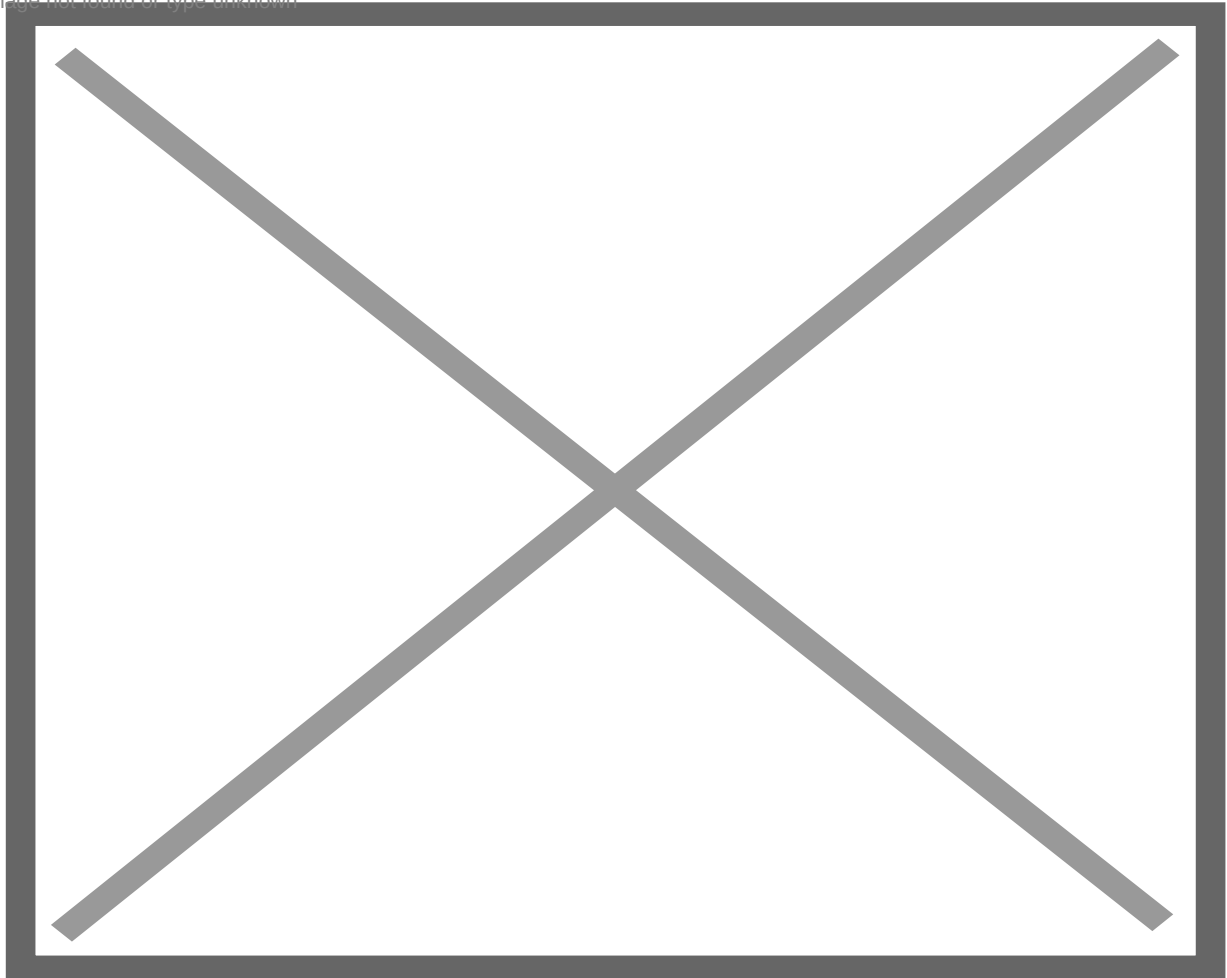
Plea Deal Allows Man To Avoid Rape, Child Abuse Charges and Lengthy Prison Term

Mackeem Appleton to serve shortened term after plea bargain

Crime / **Published On February 28, 2024 05:02 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 28, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



Mugshot of Mackeem Appleton in the year 2021. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man who was facing a lengthy prison term will soon be free after a plea deal which resulted in charges of rape, child abuse, and causing the delinquency of a minor being dismissed.

Mackeem Appleton, who was arrested in October 2021, stood accused of [sexually assaulting a minor female](#) in an incident which allegedly took place at his residence on July 1. The investigation resulted in the discovery of pictures and video of Appleton and the minor, who was

16 at the time, engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Their inappropriate relationship, according to the girl's mother, had begun when the minor was 13 years old.

During the course of investigation, police received a missing persons report from the girl's mother and eventually tracked her daughter to the apartment Appleton shared with his girlfriend and their two young children. The girl was caught by police trying to climb out of the apartment window after Appleton and his girlfriend had told officers that she was not in the unit.

Despite the girl telling police that she lied to Appleton about her age, police uncovered text messages sent by Appleton to the girl's mother apologizing "for everything I put you and your family through," and admitting that he knew she was a minor.

In March of 2023, prosecutors dismissed the case after failing to reach a plea agreement with Appleton, and refiled the matter days afterwards. In February 2024, days before the final pre-trial conference, a plea agreement was reached. Prosecutors offered to dismiss the charges of aggravated second-degree rape, second-degree rape, second-degree unlawful sexual contact, child abuse, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The four counts of prohibited sexually explicit visual medium would also be dispensed with, in exchange for a guilty plea to 3rd-degree assault.

The assault conviction would come with a 4-year incarceration period, with credit for time served, and an order barring any contact with the girl and her family. As a result of the plea deal, Appleton is not required to register as a sex offender.

During his sentencing hearing on February 22, Appleton's term of incarceration was further reduced to 3.5 years.