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Man Allegedly Pushes Girlfriend Holding Toddler in Pool During Brutal Outburst

Grandmother leaps into pool to rescue toddler following shocking assault

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Mugshot of Justin Vasquez. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man who reportedly began punching his girlfriend during an argument while she held their toddler is now facing several felony charges including child abuse.

According to court documents, police were summoned to a short-term rental unit in Estate Nazareth on Sunday after reports of a domestic violence assault. They met with a woman who said that her boyfriend, Justin Vasquez, had been drinking on the deck near the pool. After two bottles of tequila, he reportedly began arguing with her about not spending enough time with him.

The woman said that she kept her distance from Vasquez to avoid further arguments, but he entered the house, approached her, and began to curse. The woman's mother reportedly tried to get her daughter's boyfriend to calm down, but he merely included her in the barrage of cursing.

The woman told police that she pushed Vasquez out of her face, upon which he began punching her in the face and head, while she held their young child. He also reportedly began throwing things, hitting her in the left eye with a bottle of men's cologne. A portable clothing steamer struck both her and their child.

Vasquez moved from throwing items to spraying a chemical irritant in the bedroom before reportedly turning to fight the woman's mother. The older woman told her daughter to flee, and so she ran towards the pool deck. Vasquez reportedly followed her outside and called her brother via video chat.

With the woman's brother on the phone, he reportedly pushed her, still holding their child, into the pool. The woman's mother jumped into the water and was able to pull the toddler out of the pool, and Vasquez subsequently fled the scene.

Despite her injuries – bruising on her face, arm, knee and back – the woman declined medical attention. There were no visible injuries observed on the child.

Vasquez turned himself in the following day, but declined to provide a statement. He was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, simple assault, and aggravated assault and battery upon a child, all as acts of domestic violence. He was also charged with child abuse and two counts of disturbance of the peace. He was remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Tuesday, Magistrate Paula Norkaitis assessed bail in the sum of \$1000, which was paid in full. Vasquez, a resident of New York, must sign a waiver of extradition before he is allowed to return to his home state. Even back on the mainland, he must check in weekly with the probation office via telephone. He must also stay at least 25 feet away from the alleged victims at all times.

His next court appearance is scheduled for April 5.