

Image not found or type unknown

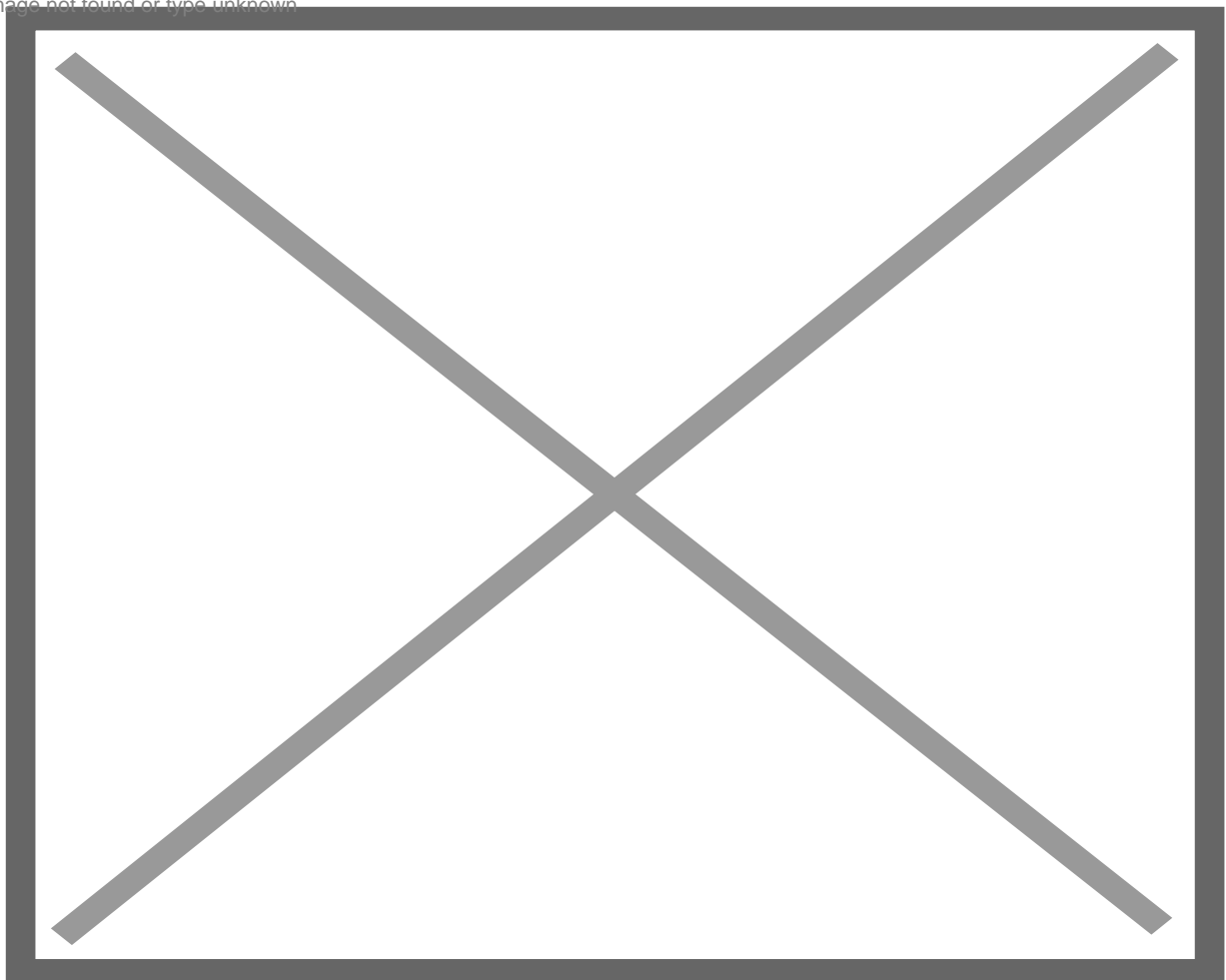
Two Local Bartenders Charged With Raping Vacationing Woman

A chilling account unfolds as two employees of the Pink Palm Hotel face severe charges after a guest accuses them of a brutal sexual assault

Crime / **Published On June 05, 2024 05:41 AM /**

Janeke Simon **June 05, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



From left to right, mugshots of Roger Perez Velazquez and Shaquille Cruz Rosario. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Two men have been arrested and charged with sexually assaulting a woman in the staff house of the hotel they worked at.?

According to court documents, the woman and her friend told police that they had met Shaquille Cruz Rosario and Roger Perez Velazquez earlier this year, when they had come to St. Thomas on

vacation. The men work as bartenders at the Pink Palm Hotel. Last week Thursday, the women came back to St. Thomas and checked into the hotel. That same night, they met up with Rosario and Velasquez and went out to party.

In the wee hours of Friday morning, the alleged victim said she went to the hotel's staff house, where the men lived, and sat in Rosario's room with him to smoke. At one point, he reportedly began to kiss and fondle her, which she told police was fine at first. However, when Rosario began to free his genitals from his pants, she said that she told him that she did not want to have sex. He reportedly continued kissing her.

Shortly thereafter, with Rosario straddling her, the woman said Velazquez walked into the room. The men reportedly exchanged some words in Spanish, and then Velazquez allegedly began grabbing at her breasts, while placing his free hand over her mouth. That is when Rosario began to rape her, the woman told officers. Her attempts to break free from the grasp of the two men were futile, she said.

According to court documents, when the assault was over, the woman told police that Rosario apologized several times, while Velazquez insisted on walking her back to her hotel room. When she returned, the woman said she told her friend what had happened, and the pair began to avoid the two men. However, the woman's friend said that she spoke to Velazquez on Saturday, who reportedly admitted that Rosario had wronged her friend. Velazquez reportedly said that he told his colleague that he needed to apologize.?

However, when police made contact with the two suspects, they claimed that the woman was the one who initiated the sexual activity. Rosario reportedly admitted to penetrating the woman, but said that it was only once. Meanwhile, Velazquez reportedly denied placing his hand over the woman's mouth.

The woman said that following her assault, she suffered from tearing and bleeding, but did not initially report it due to shame and the fear that nobody would believe her.?

After police listened to recordings of the conversation between the woman's friend and Velazquez, they decided to arrest both men and charge them with first-degree rape, first-degree assault, and first-degree unlawful sexual contact, as well as aiding and abetting on all three charges.

?On Tuesday, both Velazquez and Rosario appeared before Magistrate Paula Norkaitis, who found probable cause to uphold the charges against them. The men were each assessed bail in the amount of \$100,000, half of which must be paid in cash before they are released ahead of trial.

Should they post bail, they will both be required to surrender their travel documents and driver's licenses to the court, and will have to report to the probation office every week by telephone. Each man is also ordered to remain at least 100 feet away from the two women.

The arraignment hearings for Rosario and Velazquez have been scheduled for June 21.