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Woman Narrowly Escapes Death in Domestic Attack on Anniversary, Husband Faces Extensive Criminal Charges

Victim describes terrifying ordeal of near-strangulation at the hands of husband Raydin Antonio Ortiz Castellanos on their anniversary, whose past charges of domestic violence and forced removal due to federal matters raise additional concerns.

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Mugshot of Raydin Antonio Ortiz Castellanos. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — A man from the Dominican Republic accused of a horrific attack on his wife is now before the courts on multiple felony charges, including attempted second-degree murder.

According to court documents, last Thursday, April 24, officers were dispatched to a residence upon receiving reports of an assault. There, they met a woman nursing injuries, who said that her husband Raydin Antonio Ortiz Castellanos had attacked her. The side of her face was bloodied, police noted, as were her blouse and her jeans. She was taken to the Schneider Regional Medical Center for treatment.

A few days later, the woman reported to the Domestic Violence Unit to provide an official statement. On the night of the assault, she and Castellanos had gone out to celebrate their anniversary, the woman told officers.

On their way back home, they stopped at a gas station to get a bite to eat, and Castellanos's phone rang. The number, which showed up on the vehicle's display, belonged to a woman. When the couple got home, Castellanos's wife says she asked about the phone call. Was her husband still in communication with that woman?

Ortiz Castellanos immediately began to scream and curse, the woman told police. In response, the woman said she tried to deescalate the situation, laughing and telling her husband that the situation was not worth getting upset about. Ortiz Castellanos, however, began throwing things around the house, including a dining room chair. Alarmed at the man's volatility, the wife said she decided to leave the house. She got dressed, grabbed her bag containing her firearm, keys and cellphone, and headed out the door.

Ortiz Castellanos was reportedly sitting just outside the front door, and when he saw his wife exiting the house, he allegedly grabbed her by the throat and began to squeeze. She told police that he pushed her back inside and slammed her down onto the couch, pinning her down as he continued to strangle her. The woman said she fought back, punching and kicking her husband in an attempt to get him to release his grip on her throat. He began threatening to kill her, she said, and started reaching for her cross body bag which she said he knew contained her gun. The woman told police that she used what little strength she had to place the bag under her leg, pressing down into the couch with all her weight to prevent Ortiz Castellanos from getting to the weapon.

Unable to access the bag containing the gun, Ortiz Castellanos reportedly returned to trying to strangle his wife before apparently abandoning the attempt. The woman then called her husband's mother, informing her of what had just transpired and asking her to speak to her son. The requested intercession reportedly ended poorly, as the woman said Ortiz Castellanos once again barged into the house, this time berating his wife for speaking their business to other people. For that transgression, the woman says she received a slap in the face before Ortiz Castellanos left the room.

The woman told police that she realized her husband had left with her vehicle, so she called his mother again and asked her to intercede. Ortiz Castellanos returned shortly thereafter, the woman said, and subjected her to more violence.

He reportedly grabbed his wife by the throat once more and lifted her off the ground, walking into the house towards the bedroom while her toes dangled in the air. During that time, the woman said she felt like she would soon die. As she slipped towards unconsciousness, she told police that it felt like she was underwater, with her eyes threatening to pop out of her head from the force her husband was using to strangle her. While she begged for him to set her loose, he reportedly continued threatening to kill her.

Moments away from what she felt was a certain death, Castellanos released his grasp on his wife's throat, and she said she fell to the ground gasping for air. As she crawled towards the bed, Ortiz Castellanos reportedly pounced on her once again, trying to take her side bag. Again, she used her body weight in an attempt to shield the purse from him, in the understanding that if he gained possession of the bag, he could use the firearm within to carry out his threat to kill her. Eventually, Ortiz Castellanos left the residence again, taking some of her jewelry, and her vehicle. The woman said she called a friend, who encouraged her to call police for help.

When she returned home from the hospital following her ordeal, the woman said she noticed that one of the tires on her secondary vehicle was flat. That was the source of the sound she had heard when her husband had left the first time – it was air escaping from a tire. Police advised her to place a chair behind the front door to prevent Ortiz Castellanos's entry if he returned to the home. She did so and went to sleep at around 3:00 a.m.

The woman said that when she woke up a few hours later, the chair was no longer in place. She found her husband asleep in her daughter's bedroom, and immediately placed a quiet call to 911, telling the dispatcher that she felt unsafe. Police arrived at the residence and she directed them upstairs to where Ortiz Castellanos was sleeping. His wife received a call shortly thereafter. It was her husband demanding that she call off the officers, and promising that the couple would work things out. The woman declined.

In the morning light, as officers were taking her husband into custody, she was able to see that the flat tire had actually been slashed.

Ortiz Castellanos was arrested and charged with attempted second-degree murder, first, second and third-degree assault, simple assault, third-degree robbery, and destruction of property, all as crimes of domestic violence. He was also charged with grand larceny, unauthorized use of a vehicle, vehicle tampering, disturbance of the peace, and delaying and obstructing. He was remanded into custody to await his advice of rights hearing.

In court on Monday, Magistrate Paula Norkaitis ordered that bail be set at \$75,000. Ortiz Castellanos will have to pay that amount in full if he wishes to be freed from detention ahead of his upcoming trial. His release is also conditional upon the lack of a federal detention order. If he is able to secure his release, he will be subject to a 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew every Monday through Saturday, with a whole-day curfew on Sundays. He will also be required to report to the probation office twice a week via telephone.

Ortiz Castellano must surrender his Dominican Republic passport and driver's license if he is released from detention, and must remain at least 100 feet away from his wife at all times. Judge Norkaitis also imposed a no-contact order, and will allow him only one opportunity to retrieve his belongings from the home.

This is not the first time Ortiz Castellanos has been charged for violent conduct towards an intimate partner. He was arrested for acts of domestic violence towards an intimate partner in 2022 and 2023, however according to court records both matters were dismissed –without prejudice – at the request of prosecutors. The second matter, which had to do with the alleged [assault of his then-girlfriend](#) in front of her minor son, was discontinued because Ortiz Castellanos had reportedly been deported from the territory due to pending federal charges.

The next court appearance for Ortiz Castellanos is scheduled for May 16.