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## Lawsuit Alleges Superior Court Magistrate Injured Clerk in Courtroom Confrontation

**Filed August 8, the lawsuit claims Judge Norkaitis assaulted her clerk during an arraignment prep, causing lasting injuries, while the court ignored her complaint. The case demands a jury trial and seeks both compensatory and punitive damages.**

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Janeke Simon **August 13, 2025**

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**Magistrate Judge Paula D. Norkaitis** By. V.I. SUPERIOER COURT.

The Superior Court of the Virgin Islands is now facing an unusual and high-profile case in which one of its own magistrates and the court itself stand accused of serious misconduct. Magistrate Judge Paula D. Norkaitis has been sued by her former judicial clerk, Joanna Daniel, who alleges she was assaulted while on the job earlier this year.

According to the verified civil complaint filed August 8, 2025, Ms. Daniel was assigned to work for Judge Norkaitis in the court's Magistrate Division. On January 19, 2024, she was in the Barbel Plaza courthouse on St. Thomas preparing for an arraignment alongside Judge Norkaitis, government attorney Brenda Scales, and two deputy marshals. The filing states that during preparations, Judge Norkaitis "became irate" over Ms. Daniel's failure to mute the courtroom telephone line and "angrily grabbed the plaintiff by her shoulder and shook... dislodging her shoulder and damaging her rotator cuff."

The complaint describes the incident as "abrupt" and "violent," alleging it caused Ms. Daniel to become dazed and disoriented, and required her to seek medical treatment. She says the attack caused severe physical pain, mental anguish, and ongoing injuries.

Ms. Daniel asserts she reported the incident to court administrators but claims the Superior Court "has done very little to address the matter." As a result, she is suing Judge Norkaitis for assault and battery, and the Superior Court for negligent infliction of emotional distress, alleging the institution failed to address and correct the behavior, leaving it "unchecked in the work environment" and creating "extreme hardship" on her well-being.

The lawsuit, first reported by WTJX, seeks compensatory damages for medical expenses, pain and suffering, and emotional distress; punitive damages on the grounds that the defendants' conduct was "beyond the bounds of common decency"; as well as costs, attorney's fees, and other relief deemed just by the court. Ms. Daniel has demanded a jury trial.

The case has been assigned to Judge Kathleen McKay. As of press time, neither Judge Norkaitis nor the Superior Court had filed a response.