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Peace Officer Said he Was Spat on, Called 'Black Monkey', and told to 'Get Your Black Ass From Here' While Attempting to Cite a Bartender

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Mugshots of James Bildahl and Nathalie Hollins By. THE VIRIGN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A V.I. Department of Health enforcement officer said he was assaulted and racial slurs yelled at him by white individuals on Saturday night while attempting to perform his duty of enforcing the territory's coronavirus mandates at a bar in Cane Bay called Spratnet Beach Bar and Grill.

The incident resulted in the arrest of Nathalie Hollins, whose father is white and mother black, and James Bildahl, who is white. Hollins was charged with throwing bodily fluid or waste at a person,

interfering with an officer discharging his duty, and third-degree assault. Bildahl was levied charges of third-degree assault and interfering with an officer discharging his duty.

In a probable cause fact sheet following an advisement hearing at the Superior Court on St. Croix Monday, peace officer Wanson Harris, who serves at the V.I. D.O.H. Director of Environmental Health, described the incident that eventually resulted in the director being assaulted, called a "black monkey" and being told to get his "black ass from here." He also said he was spat on by Hollins.

According to the fact sheet, Mr. Harris visited the bar and restaurant after 7:00 p.m. Saturday as part of random inspections being performed by D.O.H. inspectors to ascertain that facilities are adhering to the protocols put in place. He said the bartender was not wearing a mask, which prompted Mr. Harris to identify himself in his capacity as a law enforcement officer with the Health Department. He said the bartender yelled and used an expletive, stating that she would not wear a mask. Mr. Harris then contacted the owner of the facility to inform the owner of the infractions observed, after the bartender failed to produce a health card. Neither the bartender or the owner was named in the document.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, Mr. Harris said patrons at the bar started to yell racial slurs at him while he was issuing a warning citation. He said these patrons "became irate and started making racial remarks by calling me a black monkey."



The incident became even worse, with Hollins yelling at Mr. Harris, "Get your black ass from here!", after she had thrown what appeared to be a beer bottle at him, according to the document.

At that point, Mr. Harris moved to place Hollins under arrest, but his duty was interfered by Bildahl, who pulled Hollins away from Officer Harris, yelling, "You are not going with her," Mr. Harris wrote.

Bildahl left the area after assaulting Mr. Harris. However Hollins continued to resist arrest "by fighting, spitting on me within the facial area and in my eye, biting me on my chest with great force, and kicking me in the groin and stomach with great force," Officer Harris wrote.

Governor Albert Bryan, responding to a Consortium question about the incident during his coronavirus press briefing on Monday, said, "Anybody that attacks anyone of our officers — whether Covid or anything else will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We make no exceptions there."

He added, "I was highly alarmed and really irate at the nerve of people to attack [an] officer trying to do his job. We're going to make sure we get justice as far as anybody who accosts, assault, any officer — especially one with this Covid-19 response right now."

Mr. Bryan said the administration was asked to reopen the facility after the incident. His response was, "Absolutely not."

V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima told the Consortium that both Hollins and Bildahl were remanded on \$25,000 bond. However, he said they may have been released after their advisement hearing on Monday. Mr. Derima said he would provide an update soon.

Update: July 1, 2020

The story has been updated to note that Hollins father is white and mother black. Previously, the story said Hollins was white.