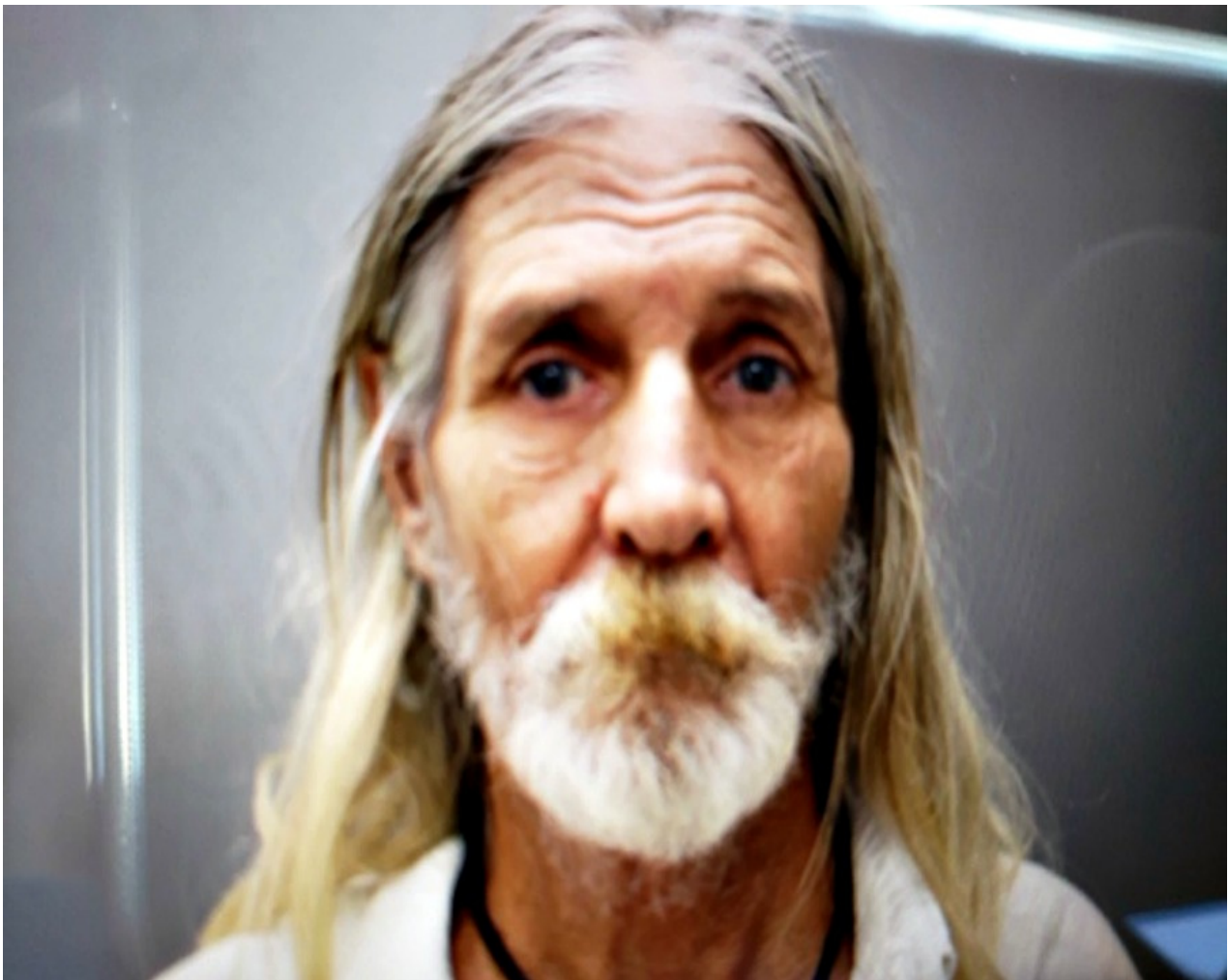


The Virgin Islands Consortium

White Man Tells Interracial Couple To Get Off Water Island Or Face Death. He Is Now Facing 75 Years In Prison.

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ST. THOMAS -- A Caucasian man is facing 75 years in prison under local hate crime laws after threatening bodily and property harm to an interracial couple living on Water Island, Attorney General Claude Walker made known during a brief press conference in St. Thomas Friday afternoon. Mr. Walker denounced the behavior and said the V.I. Department of Justice (D.O.J.) would move forward with criminal charges against the defendant, identified as Christopher Rice, seen above, after a Superior Court judge found that there was enough probable cause for criminal charges.

According to the case's affidavit, which was filed by Special Agent Sehker Tyson, who is an assistant director at D.O.J.'s Bureau of Investigation, the victims, a Black male and his Caucasian wife, had left their home on Water Island following Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and returned to the island on June 5.

But on June 8 at approximately 12:00 noon, the wife received a text message on her cellphone with threatening and derogatory words, including a demand for the wife to "tell her f*&king #\$\$@hole husband to get the f*\$# off of Water Island." The text message also warned the wife that there was a contract out to kill her husband, and that she needed to advise him to leave or else he would be shot.

Also included in the text was the N-word, the racial slur directed at Black people.

The couple were perplexed by the derogatory messages, as they could not recall being in any altercations or disagreements with anyone.

The following day, on June 9 at about 6:00 a.m., the wife discovered two voice messages on her phone from the same number that had sent the demeaning messages, and upon listening, the voice was immediately noticeable by both the wife and husband as Mr. Rice's, according to the affidavit.

The couple had met Mr. Rice, age 66, through a mutual friend when they stayed at a condominium in Puerto Rico in January 2018, the affidavit says.

Special Agent Tyson, who examined the voice messages, said Mr. Rice referred to the Black male as "a dead f@#king N^ger," and asked the wife whether she believed her husband would live to see age 55, according to the affidavit.

Part of Mr. Rice's grievance, the affidavit made known, was a generator installed at the married couple's home that had apparently annoyed Mr. Rice. In the voice message, Mr. Rice also told the wife that she would be shot because of her husband, and that "they're going to blow your house up because of that f^*king generator." Mr. Rice also advised the wife to get rid of her husband, and that the husband should return to the U.S. mainland. The victims told police that although they did not know Mr. Rice's telephone number, they could positively identify him were they to see him again.

According to the affidavit, further investigation into the matter revealed that Mr. Rice had made several police reports in June 2018, and provided officers with the same number used to send the derogatory text and voice messages to the married couple. Mr. Rice also has a Facebook page, and the same number used to call and text the victims was listed on the page as his phone contact, according to the affidavit.

Mr. Rice was charged with intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking and cyber harassment, and disturbance of the peace, according to the affidavit. The charges carry a combine prison sentence of 75 years, Attorney General Claude Walker said. Mr. Rice was released on a \$10,000 unsecured bond, and his arraignment hearing has been set for July 19.

Mr. Walker described the incident as detestable and unacceptable in the U.S. Virgin Islands. "I would like to state that the allegations are troubling in that the Defendant allegedly expressed a plan of attack on this interracial couple living on Water Island for

the sole purpose of harassing, terrorizing, and causing bodily injury to them. It is absolutely unacceptable -- and it is illegal -- for persons in the Virgin Islands to be treated this way simply because of the color of their skin," Mr. Walker said.

He added, "And it is deplorable to tell someone that either he or she may not live in a particular place in the Virgin Islands because of that person's skin color. I am appalled by the racial allegations and alleged threats of bodily harm. It is an outrage, an absolute outrage that something like this could allegedly occur in a beautiful and very diverse place such as the Virgin Islands. This interracial couple have the right to reside on Water Island without fear for their lives. And we will do everything possible to protect them."