

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Man Sentenced To 40 Years For Rape

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ST. CROIX -- Forty years in prison – with credit for 2,765 days already served – was the sentence V.I. Superior Court Judge Douglas A. Brady handed down today on Rafael Joseph for sexually assaulting a woman more than seven years ago, according to a release Department of Justice Public Media Officer Corliss Smithen issued Wednesday.

In a brief statement following the sentencing, Attorney General Claude Earl Walker said, “The defendant put this brave lady through hell – he is every woman’s nightmare – and with this lengthy prison sentence, his reign of terror against our women ends today.”

Joseph, 44, was punished for first-degree aggravated rape, a charge to which he pleaded guilty.

At Joseph's sentencing, prosecutors characterized him as a "sexual predator, serial rapist and a danger to the community," and recommended that he serve 50 years behind bars, according to D.O.J.

According to the release, police arrested Joseph on Feb. 17, 2011, after a woman complained that he raped her four days earlier. The victim reported to police that as she was leaving the beach and walking back to her car, Joseph approached her, held her at knifepoint, forced her into the nearby bush and raped her several times. He also stole her cell phone. Police charged Joseph with three counts of first-degree aggravated rape and one count each of first-degree rape, first-degree unlawful sexual contact, first-degree robbery, kidnapping for rape and carrying or using a dangerous weapon during the commission of a crime of violence in connection with the offense.

Chief Deputy Attorney General Joseph Ponteen and Assistant Attorney General Alisha Udhwani argued the case for the prosecution.

Joseph's criminal history dates back to 1992 when he was arrested and charged with first-degree rape and grand larceny. He was serving a 15-year prison term for both crimes when he escaped from custody in 2014.