

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Faces Over 100 Years in Prison After Allegedly Striking Victim With Gun, Strangling Her Unconscious Then Raping Her

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Mugshot of Stedroy Lloyd Francis. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A St. Croix man is facing a plethora of criminal charges in connection with an alleged vicious rape incident that could place him behind bars for over 100 years.

The suspect, Stedroy Lloyd Francis, has been charged with attempted murder in the first degree, rape in the first degree as a crime of domestic violence (DV), burglary in the first degree, unauthorized possession of a firearm, unauthorized possession of ammunition, assault in the first degree/ DV, assault in the second degree/ DV, assault in the third

degree/ DV, simple assault and battery, carrying or using a dangerous weapon, and disturbance of the peace by threats. These charges amount to an accumulative penalty of over 100 years in prison and fines in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Francis appeared before Judge Ernest Morris, Jr. on Friday for his advisement hearing while in the custody of the Bureau of Corrections.

At approximately 5:25 pm on Thursday, the female victim in this case filed a report of a rape. She stated that about 4:30 p.m. the same day while asleep in her residence, the suspect and his friend entered her residence with two handguns, without permission.

According to the victim's statements in the probable cause fact sheet, Francis utilized the handguns to gun-butt her and point it at her head while demanding her to perform sexual acts on him. When she attempted to flee from Francis, he punched her, grabbed her hair, and placed his arm around her neck until she lost consciousness. When she regained consciousness, she called a friend on her cellphone, at which time Francis returned to the residence to retrieve his forgotten cellphone. He then threatened twice, "If you call the police, I will kill you!" He continued to utilize the gun to threaten her by waving it up and down her head and private parts, according to the probable cause fact sheet.

The victim sustained swelling to the neck, pain to the larynx when speaking and swallowing, and scratches to the back of the neck, according to the fact sheet. She also complained of pain to her head and face, so she was advised to seek medical attention.

Attorney Amelia Joseph of the Office of the Territorial Public Defender argued that there is not probable cause for an attempted murder charge based on the evidence in the probable cause fact sheet.

Attorney Patricia Pryor refuted those claims, stating, "Not only did he threaten to kill the victim in this case, he also choked her, strangled her and until she lost consciousness." Citing the evidence in the fact sheet that Francis utilized weapons and physical force to cause injury and unconsciousness to the victim, "we certainly believe there's probable cause that he meant to carry out the threat to kill her," Ms. Pryor said. Three times in the probable cause fact sheet it says that Francis verbally threatened to kill the female victim, once stating, "I'm going kill you!"

Judge Morris did not concur with Ms. Joseph's argument. He found probable cause for the attempted murder charge at the hearing, and he urged Attn. Joseph to argue that point to the jury during the upcoming trial.

Attn. Joseph requested bail be set at \$75,000, while Attn. Pryor requested \$100,000. According to the statutes, Ms. Pryor said that bail for attempted murder and rape in the first degree warrant a bond of \$100,000 each.

"With his litany of charges, I'm going to set the bail at \$250,000 [fully secured in cash]," Judge Morris ordered.

Considering that Francis utilized his father's vehicle to transport unauthorized weapons, his father was denied as a third-party custodian. When the suspect was asked by police if he was operating the vehicle, he responded, "I don't know what truck you're talking about." If released, Francis must find another third-party custodian that is suitable to the

court.

According to the fact sheet, Francis denied all allegations and said that he was not at the victim's residence.

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