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Man Allegedly Strangled and Struck Intimate Partner, Refusing to Let Her Leave

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Mugshot of Akeem Forbes By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A St. Thomas man allegedly strangled and struck his intimate partner and refused to let her leave the home. The suspect feared the victim would report him to police if she left.

Akeem Forbes appeared before the Magistrate Judge Henry V. Carr, III via teleconference from the Bureau of Corrections on Wednesday for his advisement hearing.

Forbes was charged with the following: false imprisonment as an act of domestic violence (DV), third-degree assault/ DV, second-degree assault/ DV, and disturbance of the peace/ DV.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, at about 10:00 pm on Sunday, August 15, the victim reported that she was at Forbes's residence. They argued over Forbes wanting to see her phone, so he struck her in the back of the head several times. When she cried and begged to leave, he refused to let her leave, telling her, "There is a dog loose." Forbes has vicious dogs in his yard, and the victim has been bitten by one previously. He told her that she wasn't going anywhere because she would go to the police. He also threatened that if he ever got arrested because of her, he already told two of his friends to go after her, the fact sheet said.

Unable to leave, the victim eventually went to sleep. At around 3:00 a.m. on Monday, August 16, the victim arose to Forbes touching her. When she asked him to stop and physically moved his hand several times, he became irate and argued, the fact sheet said. He then strangled her, making it difficult for her to breathe. He also struck her in the face several times again. The victim said that Forbes's right hand injury is from his knuckle striking her teeth at some point.

According to the victim, Forbes threatened, "If you go to the police, I will kill you myself." He asked her to leave some belongings and her money to ensure that she would return if he let her leave, the fact sheet said.

Forbes gave a strikingly different account to police. He claimed that the victim was the aggressor who was first jealous of him talking outside for a long time with a former intimate partner. He said that she questioned him, argued with him, and even climbed on top of him to strangle him. Forbes said that his hand injury is from striking the molding of the bathroom during their argument. He even said that she bit her lip causing it to bleed. Forbes claimed that he never held the victim against her will and that he is trying his best to stay out of trouble, as he has been in trouble in the past.

His criminal history was discussed in court by prosecuting Attorney Brenda Scales in support of her argument that Forbes is a danger to the victim and the community. Therefore, she proposed that bail be set at \$30,000.

According to the probable cause fact sheet, photographs of the victim's injuries were taken, but they were not available to the judge at the hearing.

"I really wanted to take a look at the photographs because this is truly what he said, what she said, but this just may be enough for the court. The court did find probable cause. But I would be remised if I didn't say on the record that this case gave me difficulty," said Judge Carr.

"This case gave me some difficulty in terms of who was telling the truth, and I didn't have the benefit of the photographs," the judge said. Therefore, he allowed Forbes to post \$1,000 cash instead of the proposed \$30,000.

Judge Carr ruled on the following release conditions for Forbes:

- Post \$1,000 cash bail
- Third-party custodian
- No contact with the alleged victim
- Prohibited from leaving the STT-STJ district without prior written permission of the court
- Surrender V.I. driver's license

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