

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Arrested After Allegedly Pepper-Spraying His Three Minor Children

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Amanie Mathurin **November 16, 2021**



Mushot of Wilfredo Carmona. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A father of five has been charged with second-degree assault and simple assault and battery after he allegedly pepper sprayed three of his minor children.

Wilfredo Carmona was arrested on the night of November 13 after he called police to report that two women had entered his home and assaulted him. When police made contact with Carmona, he said that his three children left home without his permission and when he later went to bed he heard them knocking on the door. Carmona said that he refused to open the door for the children ages 17, 11 and 7 and that he also noticed

his estranged wife outside with them. According to Carmona, the oldest child attempted to gain entry into the residence and he inadvertently pepper-sprayed the children while attempting to pepper spray his wife. He alleged that the oldest child then opened the door and allowed the other children and Carmona's estranged wife into the house without permission. He says his estranged wife then assaulted him and that a pot of food was thrown at him, striking him to the shoulder.

When police interviewed the three minors, they contended that they left home to get a soda nearby and when they returned their father refused to open the door. They said that while they tried to gain entry into the house their father pepper sprayed them and started pushing them back out of the window. One of the children told police that she started pushing back while her father continued to pepper spray her. She also told police that she later grabbed a pot and threw it at her father. All three children complained of burning to the face and eyes as a result of the pepper spray and had to be treated for exposure. Carmona was subsequently arrested and remanded to the bureau of corrections.

During Wednesday's hearing, public defender Amelia Joseph told the court that Carmona had no money to post bail. Meanwhile, attorney Amie Simpson appearing for the people noted that the defendant is currently awaiting sentencing for a separate domestic violence-related case. She further explained that Carmona is the caregiver of his five minor children and they have nowhere else to go as their mother is currently homeless. Simpson informed the court that the owners of the property where Carmona resides have agreed to allow the mother to temporarily stay at the residence to care for the children while the court matter remains pending. However, Magistrate Judge Ernest E Morris, Jr. stated that he could not require Carmona to vacate a residence he legally occupies. While Attorney Simpson expressed concern for the children's welfare, the judge maintained that the Department of Human Services should be contacted and the appropriate steps taken to address these concerns.

As the hearing continued, the court learned that previously Carmona had allegedly threatened the children, telling two of the boys that he would cut them into pieces and put them in coolers. It was further stated that while attempts have been made to relocate the minors, it is difficult to find housing for 5 children and to uproot them from the home they know.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Judge noted that while he understands the concern for the children, his obligation is to set conditions which will ensure the safety of the community and Carmona's reappearance for future court matters. He emphasized that he cannot step into the shoes of the family division of the courts as that is outside of his jurisdiction.

Carmona's bail was set at \$1,000 and he will be permitted to post \$101 in cash and sign an unsecured bond for the remainder. He will be released into the custody of an approved third-party and will reside at his own residence.

Judge Morris advised that if there is any intention to remove the children from the home, that this should be done immediately. Carmona is prohibited from having any unlawful contact with the alleged victims and any witnesses in the matter. However, he stressed that this condition is subject to any amendments deemed necessary by the family court. Court documents reveal that \$101 cash was posted towards Carmona's bail as of Monday afternoon.

