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St. Croix Man Wanted in Texas Allegedly Sexually Assaulted Child Under 14 on Multiple Occasions; Bail Set at \$100,000

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Mugshot of Adan Garza Jr. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — Bail has been set in the amount of an unsecured bond of \$100,000 for a man wanted on felony sexual assault charges in Texas.

Adan Garza Jr. was arrested in St. Croix on November 12th after an NCIC operator informed police that a hit for a wanted person appeared in the system while entering a police record verification request from the Virgin Islands Housing Authority for Adan Garza Jr. A September 2021 warrant was issued by the Kleberg County Sheriff's Office, where Garza is wanted for continuous sexual abuse of a child under the age of 14, a felony charge. According to Texas court

documents, Garza allegedly sexually assaulted the child on at least four different occasions. When contacted, the Kleberg County Sheriff's Office requested that USVI authorities hold Garza as they intended to extradite him.

At an advisement hearing on Monday, Public Defender Amelia Joseph requested that Garza be released into the custody of his wife on the posting of \$300 and the signing of an unsecured bond. Appearing for the people, Rob Barchiesi opposed the request, arguing that no bail should be granted pursuant to extradition provisions. Barchiesi explained that Texas authorities had been contacted regarding Garza's extradition and asked that Garza be detained in the interim, pending further proceedings and his eventual return to Texas. He stressed that the people wanted to ensure the defendant's return to Texas and suggested that Garza was aware of the charges against him but chose not to deal with them. He argued that the people were therefore concerned that Garza may flee now that he knows Texas authorities are coming for him. Barchiesi requested that the court give agents from Texas at least 30 days to return the defendant to Texas.

Attorney Joseph however argued that Garza was not hiding from authorities at all and that there was no evidence that he left Texas upon learning of charges against him. She stated that Garza has been living in St. Croix for two years and is employed in the territory.

Judge Ernest Morris Jr. subsequently indicated that the court would require further examination as to whether Garza did, in fact, flee from justice. During Barchiesi's questioning of a local officer, it was revealed that upon learning of why he was being detained Garza stated "oh that's what this is about. I haven't been there in years." The officer stated that while interviewing Garza he confirmed that he lived in Texas before coming to St. Croix. However, when questioned as to whether there was proof to show that Garza was aware of charges being filed and fled as a result, the officer could not provide such evidence.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the judge noted that he did not hear any specific evidence which suggests that Garza was officially presented with charging documents and that he was certain of charges against him.

Bail was set in the form of an unsecured bond of \$100,000 and Garza will be placed under 24-hour house arrest with electronic monitoring. He will be required to surrender his passport and complete a waiver of extradition form.