

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman and Her Child Allegedly Assaulted by Umbrella-Wielding Female Over Line Dispute

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Mugshot of Rochelle McDonald. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A woman has been charged with simple assault after she allegedly struck another woman and her child with an umbrella.

Rochelle McDonald was taken into custody Monday afternoon after officers responded to a report of a fight in progress. The alleged victim told officers that she and her two children were waiting to conduct business at an establishment when a woman later identified as Rochelle McDonald attempted to cut in front of her. The woman claimed that she respectfully indicated to McDonald that she was in line before her, which caused

McDonald to become irate. According to the woman, McDonald began using profane language and then proceeded to wave her umbrella in her face as if she intended to strike her.

The alleged victim of the assault reported that she attempted to hold the umbrella in an effort to avoid being struck, but McDonald began carelessly swinging the umbrella at her, striking her and her minor daughter several times. She then raised her left arm in an attempt to block the attack, but McDonald kept on striking her. McDonald was eventually restrained by the security officer after the victim called upon him for assistance. The responding police officers noted that they observed scratches and bruising to the woman's left forearm. They were also able to view surveillance footage of the incident which confirmed the woman's account of the incident. McDonald was arrested and later released after posting \$500 bail.

She appeared for a virtual advisement hearing on Wednesday where Judge Paula Norkaitis found probable cause for the charges of simple assault and disturbance of the peace. Attorney Frederick Johnson requested that she be released on her own recognizance and that the posted bail be refunded. He further asked that she not be subjected to any onerous restrictions, particularly travel limitations.

Judge Norkaitis concluded that the bail figure would remain as posted and that McDonald maintain a minimum distance of 15 feet from the victim at all times. She is strictly prohibited from having any direct or indirect contact with the woman, or any potential witnesses in the matter. While the matter remains pending, she is not allowed to leave the island without court permission. McDonald's arraignment has been scheduled for January 14, 2022.