

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Arrested For Allegedly Battering Girlfriend, Pointing Gun to Her Head

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Amanie Mathurin **January 12, 2022**



Mugshot of Danelvin Perez By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man has been charged with assault after he allegedly held a gun to his girlfriend's head and threatened to kill her.

Danelvin Perez is charged with assault, disturbance of the peace and escape from custody. The latter offense carries the heaviest penalty — a maximum of ten years behind bars.

According to police, officers responded to a report of an assault on Saturday night and made contact with the alleged victim who was described as being “in a disarray, crying, and had several bruises and scratches on her body”. She told police that she was at her apartment when her boyfriend Danelvin Perez came over and they got into an argument which led to him assaulting her. The woman said Perez grabbed her by the throat and struck her in the face several times with his fist. She further alleged that he pulled out a black handgun, held it to her head and threatened to kill her repeatedly. Based on her account, Perez eventually let her go and she ran out of the house, got in her vehicle and fled. However, as she fled, Perez allegedly told her that he would be waiting for her to return to the apartment. Consequently, she told police that she was in fear for her life and afraid to return to the apartment.

A police officer subsequently travelled to the apartment where they made contact with the suspect and he was placed under arrest. Although the officer searched the apartment with the victim’s permission, they did not locate the firearm she mentioned. The probable cause fact sheet notes that while the officer was holding the suspect by his arm, “he suddenly broke free” and attempted to run away. However, as he started to run he tripped and fell to the ground. An officer then assisted him off the ground and he was escorted into the police vehicle where he was transported to the Bureau of Corrections to await his bail hearing.

At that hearing, Assistant V.I. Attorney General Brenda Scales requested that bail be set at \$15,000 with no 10 percent provision. She asserted that the defendant has no documents, no social security number and no designated employer. According to Scales, the only thing known about the accused is that he was born in the Dominican Republic. Despite this, attorney Andy Johnson requested that bail be set at \$1000, with no 10 percent.

Upon hearing that request, Scales emphasized that Johnson was asking the court to set bail at \$1000 for a man who allegedly put a gun to a woman’s head and threatened to kill her. Scales stressed that based on the allegations, Perez was a danger and is also considered a flight risk as the court is unsure how long he’s been in the territory.

After considering the arguments, judge Paula Norkaitis set bail at \$15,000 with no 10 percent provision. She affirmed that the court took note of the officer’s account that the alleged victim was discovered with several bruises. She also stated that the court did find probable cause for the charge of escape from custody and that the court views the defendant as an “extreme flight risk”. According to the judge, based on the nature of the allegations and the weight of the evidence, Perez is found to be a danger not only to the victim but to the community.

As a condition of his release, he is prohibited from going to the woman’s apartment except for one opportunity to retrieve his belongings under police escort. He is also forbidden from having any unlawful contact with the victim and must remain at least 20 feet from her at all times. Perez must also surrender his passport to the court and has been instructed not to leave the territory without written permission from the court. Following these pronouncements from the judge, attorney Johnson asked her to reconsider the escape charge, arguing that it was a matter of resisting arrest rather than escaping. Johnson put forth that there was no reason to “saddle” the defendant with a possible 10 year sentence. However, Norkaitis ended the hearing by affirming that her conclusions were final.

