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4-Month-Old Baby Taken to Hospital For Evaluation After Being Struck in the Head During Alleged Assault Incident

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Mugshot of J'vonte Mercer . By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — Police have arrested a man accused of physically assaulting the mother of his child.

J'vonte Mercer was arrested on Friday evening after hospital security requested police assistance for a disturbance involving a minor. The responding officers found the mother of Mercer's four-month-old baby with cuts to her neck. She reportedly told police that she had arrived at Mercer's grandmother's home to retrieve her daughter earlier that evening when an argument ensued. According to the woman, her friend began to record the interaction as Mercer and the victim are

often hostile towards each other. Mercer became upset by this and asked her friend to stop. However, the woman refused and Mercer attempted to grab the phone, causing the mother of his child to put her hand up and ask him “what the [expletive] is wrong with you?”

Mercer then allegedly grabbed the mother of his child by the neck and began pulling on her chain, causing it to burst. She told police that she began striking him with her fist hoping that he would release her. A physical altercation erupted and according to the woman, during the fight, Mercer struck their four-month-old baby to the head. The couple then traveled to the hospital to have the baby evaluated and another verbal altercation began. That argument was interrupted by hospital security and the V.I. Police Department's Domestic Violence Unit was notified of the matter.

Police investigations revealed that a judge had approved a restraining order against Mercer which prohibited him from directly or indirectly subjecting the mother of his child to any act of domestic violence. The original restraining order had been extended for 45 days on June 10th, 2022. Mercer was subsequently arrested and charged with simple assault as an act of domestic violence, disturbance of the peace and violation of a restraining order.

He appeared before a judge on Tuesday and bail was set at \$1,000. The defendant must post the full amount to secure his release. The judge has ordered Mercer to remain at least 50 feet away from the mother of his child at all times, stressing that the court must ensure the victim is protected from the defendant. He is to have absolutely no contact with the woman, not even through friends or relatives. Visitation arrangements for the infant will therefore have to be made through the Family Resource Center.