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## Venezuelan National Who Arrived In USVI Just Six Months Ago Facing Rape, Burglary Charges

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Janeka Simon **March 04, 2023**

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**Mugshot of Jhonniel Tejada. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**ST. THOMAS** — A recent transplant from South America is before the courts on charges including rape and burglary.

Police reports indicate that a St. John woman reported to the Leander Jurgen Command police station on the evening of January 23 to report that she had been sexually assaulted.

She said that she had been bar-hopping the previous Thursday before being escorted to her home in Grunwald by two friends, one male. Around 2:00 a.m. on Friday, January 20, she awoke to find that “her male friend was on top of her trying to kiss her.” She also reported feeling pain in her

“private areas,” and struggled to get the man off of her. He reportedly left when she ordered him to get out of her home.

A subsequent police investigation identified Jhonniel Tejada as the chief suspect. He was arrested on Wednesday, March 1 near the Leader Jorgen Command after a warrant was issued in his name. Tejada was then taken to the Richard N. Callwood Command police station where he was charged with first-degree rape, first-degree unlawful sexual contact, burglary and unlawful entry.

Unable to post his \$75,000 bail, he was detained at the Bureau of Corrections until his first court hearing.

In court on Friday, Tejada, through an interpreter, learned that if convicted on all counts against him, he could face a total of more than 60 years in prison. His proposed third-party custodian was rejected by the court, who agreed with prosecutors that Tejada was an extreme flight risk, having no close ties in the territory and having moved here a mere six months ago.

The Venezuelan national will have to present another third-party custodian that is acceptable to the court, before he is able to be released. Tejada is next scheduled appear in court on March 17 for arraignment.