

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ex-Boyfriend Attacked by Woman and New Girlfriend at Carnival

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From left to right, Dinique Diaz and Mardette Ward. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — Two women accused of attacking a man on Carnival Thursday appeared in court to face assault charges.

The alleged victim presented himself at the Richard Callwood Command police station on April 27, accusing his daughter's mother Dinique Diaz and her current girlfriend Mardette Ward of attacking him. After filing the report, the man went to the emergency room at the Schneider Regional Medical Center to receive treatment for a large laceration to the

forehead.

That was where the investigating officer met the man, immediately noticing the gaping wound between his eyes. He was in Carnival Village after J'Ouvert, the man told the police officer, and had stopped to have a drink with a few friends before heading home. That is where Diaz and Ward confronted him, he said. During the ensuing altercation, Ward allegedly struck him in the face while Diaz broke a glass on his vehicle.

Ward was also in the emergency room that evening, receiving treatment for a laceration to her chin. She told the investigating officer that when she and Diaz were in the Village, they saw the man's vehicle parked along the roadside. They took the daughter Diaz and the victim share from his SUV, took her to a nearby booth to get something to eat, and then returned her to the vehicle. After that, Ward recounted that the girlfriends then approached the child's father to "ask him about his tone towards Diaz," according to documents presented before the court. Ward accused the man of starting the fistfight by throwing a punch at a male companion of the women.

The officer subsequently obtained and reviewed surveillance footage of the incident from cameras near the Fort Christian Parking Lot, which are monitored by the Virgin Islands Police Department. She observed the man dancing while the women approached his vehicle, parked between booths 25 and 26 of Carnival Village. The officer watched the women return the child to the SUV and head to booth 25, where the man was. The footage reportedly shows Ward stepping towards the man, "and then a fight begins," according to the investigating officer. The child's father is reportedly captured on the surveillance footage pushing all three other parties away; the two women and their male companion. Diaz reportedly begins to attack the man's vehicle, where she had previously put her child. The cameras, according to the officer's account, captured her striking the front windshield and damaging it before doing the same to the back glass, removing the windshield wiper from the rear of the vehicle in her assault.

The child's father reportedly kicked her mother away from the vehicle before being attacked by his ex's new girlfriend. Their male companion can reportedly be seen taking the man to the ground, where both women begin to attack him. On camera, the third man pulls them apart, and the child's father scraps briefly with Ward again before other bystanders separate them.

This Tuesday, May 2, the women presented themselves at the Domestic Violence Unit, where they were allowed to review the surveillance footage for themselves. Ward reportedly told the investigating officer that she understood how, upon watching the video, she could be perceived as the aggressor, but maintained that she was not looking for trouble when she approached her girlfriend's ex-lover. Ward reportedly admitted, however, to approaching the man with her girlfriend despite knowing of the existence of a restraining order in place. She also admitted that neither she nor Diaz were given permission to enter the man's vehicle, but Diaz maintained that all she wanted to do was get her daughter a drink. As for the laceration which brought Ward to the emergency room, which eventually required 11 stitches to close, she told the officer she did not know how she got it, having not noticed that she was cut until after the fight was over.

The man came in on Wednesday, May 3, to give a video statement. In it, he says that when the women removed his daughter from the vehicle, he asked them "Where are you

going?” Diaz informed him of her intentions to get their daughter a drink, and the man says he decided not to raise the issue of the restraining order, since he was having a good time post-J’Ouvert. When the women returned and Ward stepped close to him, he said he told her “The three of you can’t beat me.” That reportedly triggered the woman, who reportedly grabbed his head and slammed it into the wall. He recounted the two women hitting him while he pushing all three of them out of the hallway where they had congregated. The man spoke of how his child’s mother reportedly cracked the windshield of his vehicle before running to the rear to repeat the process. He said it was fear for the safety of his 4-year old daughter in the back seat that prompted him to kick her mother away from the vehicle. The man’s recorded statement indicated that he felt “jumped,” even though he said he believed the other man may have been trying to part the fighters at first.

The court order that was mentioned turned out to be a reciprocal restraining order for domestic violence, which was issued in January of this year.

Diaz and Ward turned themselves in around midday on Thursday May 4, and were arrested and charged. They were both charged with simple assault, third-degree assault, and disturbance of the peace, and aiding and abetting. Dinique Diaz faces additional charges of violating a court order, damage to property, damaging a vehicle, and reckless endangerment. Both women were remanded to the Bureau of Corrections until their first court appearance on Friday May 5..

In court on Friday, bail was set for Mardette Ward at \$25,000, with a 10% provision to secure release, which court records indicate may have been waived. Meanwhile, Diaz was released on a \$5000 unsecured bond. Both women are being represented by the Office of the Territorial Public Defender.