

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Faces Domestic Violence Charges Following Alleged Violent Attack on Girlfriend

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Mugshot of Jean Sterling. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — A man who allegedly punched his girlfriend to the ground when she went to hand him his cell phone is now facing domestic violence charges.

According to court documents, last Wednesday, May 31, police were summoned to a safe house where they met a woman who had been placed there by the Family Resource Center's Victim's Advocate. Through a translator, the woman told them that the previous Sunday, she got home from work about 2:00 a.m. An hour later, one of her boyfriend's two phones began ringing continuously. She said she picked it up and brought it to him,

asking him “aren’t you going to answer?”

The woman told police that her boyfriend, Jean Sterling, reportedly then left the house to use his phone, and she followed him to give him his second device. She said he turned around and punched her in the face, the force of the blow sending her to the ground. The woman recounted that her boyfriend hit her again on the left side of her upper body while she was on the ground.

Dizzy and slipping in and out of consciousness at that point, the woman told police that she felt Sterling pick her up from the floor and carry her inside to the bedroom, according to the probable cause fact sheet. Even though there were no further incidents, she said she was terrified. The next day, the woman told police that her boyfriend would not let her out of his sight, thwarting her desire to report the matter to the police. However, she said that on Tuesday, May 29, she knew that Sterling would have to go to work, and when he did so, a friend helped her get to the Family Resource Center.

Police found that the woman had contusions to her left eye, her upper left arm and her upper back. She also sustained abrasions on her right knee where she fell. The woman told police that Sterling had assaulted her several times before, but that she had never reported the incidents to police. The woman is now reportedly being assisted in requesting a restraining order from the court.

Police reported that Sterling failed to show up for several scheduled interviews in subsequent days, and eventually a wanted poster was generated and issued to the public. On Friday, June 2, someone reported that he was at a store on Turpentine Run Road, where police eventually tracked him down. He reportedly denied the allegations, following which he was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and simple assault as crimes of domestic violence, as well as disturbance of the peace. Due to the territory’s domestic violence statute, Sterling was remanded into custody until his scheduled advice of rights hearing in court on Monday.

As of press time, there were no details on the conditions of Sterling’s potential release ahead of trial.