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Woman Who Allegedly Drowned Her Daughter Arrested; Bryan Addresses Mental Health Following Incident

First-degree murder charges filed: Police take mother into custody in connection with daughter's drowning

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Mugshot of Anyah Smith. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

As he wrapped up his remarks during Monday's Government House press briefing, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. disclosed a key piece of information in the recent death of a 9-year old girl.

"This weekend, we had another tragic incident on the island of St. Thomas, where a mother attempted to take her life and the life of her nine-year-old," said the governor. "Unfortunately, she

was successful in taking the life of her nine-year-old.”

The circumstances of the girl’s death at the hands of her mother had not previously been disclosed by authorities. The VIPD’s initial press release issued late Saturday stated only the fact that she had died in a suspected drowning, but called the death “suspicious.” While the case had not yet been classified a homicide, investigators were treating it as such, given initial suspicions that the girl may have drowned in waters somewhere on the St. Thomas waterfront before her body was moved to the area of Vitracó Mall. A person of interest, police say, had been identified.

Following the governor's remarks, the VIPD issued a release announcing the arrest of the child's mother, identified as 32-year-old Anyah Smith, who the VIPD revealed has been charged with first-degree murder and associated charges linked to the death of her daughter.

[Sources told the Consortium](#) that hours before to the child’s death Saturday morning, a disturbance had occurred at the residence of the child’s mother. The woman was reportedly seen throwing items outside the house before leaving with the child.

Governor Bryan characterized the incident as another example of the fragile mental health of some Virgin Islanders, and used the issue to remind residents that “we have to pay attention to one another and be our brother’s keeper.” He said that classmates of the deceased youngster at the Jane E. Tuitt Elementary School were receiving support as they try to cope with the sudden loss.