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St. Thomas Pastor Arrested on Child Abuse and Unlawful Sexual Contact Charges

Lawrence Turnbull, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church, was arrested on charges of child abuse, second-degree unlawful sexual contact, obscene internet contact with a minor, harassment by telephone, cyberstalking, and disturbance of the peace.

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Ernice Gilbert **March 01, 2025**

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Mugshot of Lawrence Turnbull. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Police Department Criminal Investigation Bureau has arrested 63-year-old Lawrence Turnbull of Estate Mandahl, and pastor of the St. Paul Baptist Church, on charges of child abuse and unlawful sexual contact.

According to VIPD Director of Communications Glen Dratte, the arrest took place on Friday following an extensive investigation into allegations of inappropriate conduct spanning several years.

According to the police report, a minor reported to law enforcement that over the past six years, Turnbull—who served as her pastor—established a relationship with her, positioning himself as a mentor and father figure. However, the minor later realized that his intentions were not genuine. Investigators determined that Turnbull allegedly exploited the minor’s trust by engaging in inappropriate physical contact, despite her repeated attempts to avoid him.

The victim provided evidence that Turnbull acknowledged his involvement in unwelcome sexual contact and indicated that he continued to pursue her even after she clearly expressed her disinterest. The investigation ultimately led to his arrest by the Major Crimes Unit.

Turnbull was taken into custody at 2:30 p.m. Friday and faces charges of child abuse, second-degree unlawful sexual contact, obscene internet contact with a minor, harassment by telephone, cyberstalking, and disturbance of the peace.

His bail was set at \$60,000, and he was transported to the Richard N. Callwood Command, where he was processed before being remanded to the Bureau of Corrections, pending his advise of rights hearing.

The VIPD is encouraging anyone with additional information regarding this case to contact the authorities. Reports can be made by calling 911, Detective LoBlack of the Criminal Investigation Bureau, or the Police Chief’s Office at (340) 774-2211. Anonymous tips can also be submitted via 1-800-222-TIPS.