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## Suspect Accused in Killing of Denston Bacchus Allowed to Leave St. Croix for House Arrest in Florida, Beyond VIPD Control

Travis Lawrence, accused of killing 76-year-old Denston Bacchus, was allowed by Superior Court Judge Earnest Morris to return to Florida on 24-hour house arrest without electronic monitoring, placing him beyond the reach of Virgin Islands police oversight

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**Mugshot of Travis Lawrence. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLIC DEPARTMENT.**

ST. CROIX — The Superior Court of the Virgin Islands has permitted Travis Lawrence, a 36-year-old Florida resident charged with first-degree murder in connection with the fatal beating of 76-year-old Denston Bacchus, to leave the island and serve house arrest in Florida, where the V.I.

Police Department has no jurisdiction to monitor his movements. The ruling was made by Superior Court Judge Earnest Morris, who presided over Lawrence's probable cause hearing.

According to a report from the Criminal Investigation Bureau, the incident occurred on June 15, 2025, at approximately 3:53 a.m., when the 911 Emergency Call Center received a call reporting an assault at Estate St. George in Frederiksted. When officers arrived, they learned that the victim, described as an elderly man, had been beaten unconscious and transported to the Juan Luis Hospital Emergency Department.

Investigators from the VIPD Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) found the victim unconscious with severe head injuries. Witnesses told detectives that they were asleep when they heard someone outside calling for help. Upon checking, they recognized the man as their neighbor, Travis Lawrence. The victim reportedly invited Lawrence inside to assist him, but once inside, Lawrence locked the screen door behind him and began punching the victim repeatedly in the face and head.

Due to the extent of his injuries, the victim was airlifted off-island for advanced medical treatment. Lawrence was detained and later released, with the Superior Court granting permission for him to leave the Virgin Islands while the case remained under investigation.

The victim, later identified as Denston Bacchus, succumbed to his injuries on August 20, 2025, prompting detectives to reclassify the case as a homicide. A forensic autopsy confirmed the cause of death as homicide, and detectives from the Major Crime Unit sought a warrant for Lawrence's arrest.

On September 23, a Superior Court judge signed the warrant, setting Lawrence's bail at \$1 million. The warrant was entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to aid law enforcement agencies in locating and apprehending the suspect.

On November 3 at approximately 12:03 p.m., Lawrence surrendered at the Wilbur H. Francis Command Police Station accompanied by his attorney. He was formally booked, and special arrangements were made for his probable cause hearing to be held that same afternoon before Judge Earnest Morris.

Following the hearing, Judge Morris permitted Lawrence to post bail and return to Tampa, Florida, under 24-hour house arrest. The court order did not include electronic monitoring, meaning local law enforcement has no ability to oversee his compliance with bail conditions.

Lawrence faces multiple charges, including first-degree murder, assault in the first degree, assault in the third degree, aggravated assault and battery, and mayhem.

The case remains pending in the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.