

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Bryan Mourns Eustace Charles, Officer Assigned to Roach's Security Detail, After Williams Delight Killing

Bryan called Charles' death a devastating loss to the government family as VIPD and the FBI investigate the fatal shooting; the officer served on Lt. Gov. Tregenza Roach's security detail, and it was unclear whether Sunday's campaign events would proceed.

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Ernice Gilbert **July 26, 2026**



Police and emergency crews secure a Williams Delight street after VIPD Officer Eustace Charles was found fatally shot inside a vehicle early Sunday morning. By. VIPD

ST. CROIX — Executive Security Officer Eustace Charles, who was found fatally shot inside a vehicle in Williams Delight early Sunday, was assigned to Lt. Gov. Tregenza

Roach's security detail, Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. disclosed while describing the killing as a devastating loss to the government family.

Charles, 51, was a V.I. Police Department officer assigned to the Executive Security Unit. VIPD and the Federal Bureau of Investigation are jointly investigating his death, and police said the person responsible remained at large.

The Roach-Francis campaign had advertised a motorcade and community rally on St. Croix for Sunday ahead of the Aug. 1 primary election. The promotional material listed a 10 a.m. assembly, an 11 a.m. motorcade and a rally beginning at 4 p.m. at the campaign's St. Croix headquarters. The campaign has since announced that "out of respect for Agent Charles and to allow the Virgin Islands Police Department to devote its personnel and resources fully to the investigation, the campaign has postponed its motorcade scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. today on St. Croix."

Officer Found Inside Vehicle

The 911 Emergency Call Center received a report of shots fired in Williams Delight at approximately 5:50 a.m. Sunday.

Responding officers found Mr. Charles unresponsive inside a vehicle with multiple gunshot wounds. Emergency Medical Technicians determined that he had no vital signs.

Police Commissioner Mario Brooks expressed condolences to Mr. Charles' relatives, friends and colleagues and urged the suspect to surrender. He said investigators would use every available resource to make an arrest.

Mr. Bryan said he was angered and heartbroken by the officer's death.

"I am shocked, heartbroken and angered by the tragic shooting death of Executive Security Officer Eustace Charles."

The governor described Mr. Charles as a valued member of both VIPD and the Office of the Governor.

"Officer Charles was a valued member of the Virgin Islands Police Department's Executive Security Unit and a dedicated member of the Office of the Governor family. He was assigned to the lieutenant governor's security detail and served with professionalism, commitment and a deep sense of responsibility."

Mr. Bryan said the loss was being felt throughout the offices of the governor and lieutenant governor.

"His death is a devastating loss to the Executive Security Unit and to the entire family at the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Those who worked alongside Officer Charles knew him as a dependable colleague and public servant who took great pride in protecting others."

The governor said he and Mr. Roach were extending their condolences to the officer's family, loved ones and colleagues.

“Lieutenant Governor Tregenza A. Roach, Esq., and I extend our deepest condolences to Officer Charles’ family, loved ones, fellow officers and colleagues during this extraordinarily painful time. We grieve with them and will stand beside them as they confront this unimaginable loss.”

Mr. Bryan called for those responsible to be identified and brought to justice.

“This heinous act of violence has taken a valued life and shaken our government family. I share the anger and disbelief felt by so many across our community, and I expect a thorough investigation to ensure that the person or persons responsible are swiftly brought to justice.”

“May Officer Eustace Charles rest in peace, and may his family find strength in the love and support of a grateful community.”

Anyone with information about the killing is asked to contact 911 or the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 340-778-2211. Anonymous tips may also be submitted to Crime Stoppers V.I. at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).