

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Increased Police Presence Not Because Of Capehart, Police Commissioner Says

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Ernice Gilbert **August 27, 2014**



When Senator Diane Capehart was carjacked at gunpoint on Monday night, it wasn't too long before V.I. Police Commissioner Rodney Querrard Sr. issued a statement announcing changes within the department that would result in an increased police presence on the streets of the Virgin Islands.

Since the announcement however, people of the territory have questioned the commissioner's reasoning behind the change, noting that people have been dying, shops are being robbed, homes are being looted and other crimes have been occurring daily in the Virgin Islands, yet it's only when a Senator's life is threatened that he decided to take action.

On Tuesday, Querrard Sr. defended himself.

"It's certainly not because of who she is," Querrard said, referring to Senator Diane Capehart. "Everybody is important to us, and we have continuously tried to change our strategies to get a handle of the crime here."

Querrard said he was saddened when he received calls and texts, and heard stories on various media outlets claiming that he was only acting because someone of "importance" had been affected, and not because he really cared about the welfare of the people.

"I reached out and tried to get the message out and change the initiative whenever we think a change in the game plan can work," he said. "Nobody is more important to us. No crime is more important. Every crime gets the same attention and all investigations get the same weight."

Querrard Sr.'s words don't seem to align with his actions, as in recent times there has been an escalation in crime in the territory, with Crucian Gold and Mid-Island Credit Union being robbed at gunpoint in the last few weeks, yet Querrard did not announce an increase in police presence then.

Meanwhile, Senator Diane Capehart in a release on Tuesday thanked the police department for their timely response and professionalism following her trouble on Monday night.

"I would like to thank the men and women of the Virgin Islands Police Department for their quick response and professionalism. I understand the great undertaking of keeping our community safe, especially with the limited manpower."

Capehart and her friend were putting up campaign signs on the Melvin Evans Highway near Hannah's Rest for the November 4th General Election when two men approached them demanding their belongings. After handing over their cellphones and an undisclosed amount of cash, the suspects made away in Capehart's navy blue 2013 Jeep Wrangler.

As they escaped, the suspects stopped to collect three other men who were ostensibly hiding in bushes a few feet up the road before heading east, police said.

"Though I was not physically hurt, I suspect that the effect of the experience will be with me for a long time. And while I lost valuable property, I escaped with my life," Capehart said.

"Being a victim presents an entirely different perspective on the issue of crime in the Virgin Islands."

At the time of this writing, Capehart's navy blue Jeep Wrangler, covered in campaign posters and bumper stickers, had not been discovered.