

The Virgin Islands Consortium

The Community Has Provided A "Veil of Protection" For Criminals, Police Officer Says

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Ernice Gilbert **September 07, 2014**



One of the reasons why many crimes go unsolved in the Virgin Islands is because the community has chosen not to report what they know, police officer and senatorial candidate Naomi "Sandra" Joseph said in a recent interview.

Speaking on local radio show, "The Virgin Islands Political Consortium" on [102.1 FM, Life Radio](#), Joseph said criminals have "a veil of protection that the community itself has provided."

"One of the things that has to be stressed is that crime-fighting is not just the police department's responsibility, it is the community at large. So, the community can't see,

hear and know and don't get involved," Joseph pointed out.

I think [the criminals] know that if you see it, you're not going to say anything. They have this veil of protection that the community itself has provided, so we as people have to now determine what's more important: me having peace of mind and knowing that I am safe if I say what I saw, say what I know [and] say what I heard. That in itself helps law enforcement to put the criminals behind bars.

Joseph said if elected to the 31st Legislature, she would implement the CCTV service, a program that entails installing cameras in the Territory's notoriously high-crime neighborhoods.

"I've heard people tell me as a law enforcement officer, 'Naomi, I'm afraid to get involved. I'm afraid that I'll be victimized.' Well, I'm saying let's do this: Let's have the CCTV service setup in our high-crime areas -- that would at least eliminate the need for a living witness to come in to testify [about] what they saw. [Instead], let's play a video that captured what



Police Officer Naomi "Sandra" Joseph

By implementing the video-monitoring system, Joseph said it would serve to help build the community's trust in law enforcement.

"That would allow for the territory to develop a trust in the department's ability," she said. "I think [the CCTV service] would be key to at least getting us back to where, you know, something happens [and] police is going to catch the perpetrator."

Joseph, who has been an officer with the V.I.P.D. for close to 30 years, said she "might be biased" in saying that the police department does a good job; however, she acknowledged there is room for improvement.

Joseph also confirmed the Police Department's authorized strength as 250, and that the department was "way below" its threshold. She would not, however, disclose how low the numbers were, citing security reasons.

When asked why criminals appear to be so bold in committing crimes, Joseph said the community has allowed criminals to go unpunished because of people's unwillingness to share information.

"I think [the criminals] know that if you see it, you're not going to say anything. They have this veil of protection that the community itself has provided, so we as people have to now determine what's more important: me having peace of mind and knowing that I am safe if I say what I saw, say what I know [and] say what I heard. That in itself helps law enforcement to put the criminals behind bars," she said.

She further lamented the culture in the Territory of what many crime-plagued cities in the United States dub as 'no-snitching.'

"..When the community stays silent and say, 'I ain't saying nothing, I ain't see nothing, I ain't know nothing or heard nothing,' those are the elements that causes us to not be able to do the things we have to do."

With that, Joseph said she believes there is a witness for every crime.

"There's not a crime that happens without a witness," she said. "Somebody saw something, somebody heard something, somebody knows something. If they would tell us what they know, saw and heard, we would be able to get to those criminals faster."

In recent weeks, the Territory has seen a sharp rise in criminal activity, with perpetrators [robbing banks](#), [credit unions](#), [jewelry stores](#) and [citizens](#).