

The Virgin Islands Consortium

UPDATE: BOC Director Details Detainees Overpowering Guard In Prison Riot

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Following a story [the VI Consortium reported Wednesday](#) about a riot that broke out Monday morning at the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility on St. Croix, Director of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections Julius Wilson--who first issued a brief statement about the brawl late Tuesday night--issued a longer update Wednesday afternoon, both times referring to the incident as an "assault on a bureau officer and disturbance staged by detainees at the Golden Grove Adult Correctional Facility & Detention Center (GGACF/DC)."

In the *VI Consortium's* first report on the incident, Assistant Warden Denise Prosper said the incident took place when one of the 16 detainees housed in the secure lockdown unit

where the fight broke out had been let out of his cell during his individual recreation hour on Monday morning. Prosper said that somehow the other detainees in the unit got out of their cells and a fight ensued between the detainees. She did not make mention of an officer being attacked by detainees, as the BOC is reporting. Officials say the incident happened at about 9 a.m. Monday.

In a different twist on the story, another media outlet reported Wednesday that seven prisoners had been awoken before dawn on Monday, shackled and taken to a holding cell where they were severely beaten by guards. No reason was given for the beating. When asked about this version of events, Juel Anderson, public information officer for the BOC, told the *VI Consortium* Wednesday she knew nothing of it and, in fact, had not spoken to the warden about a riot at the prison at all.

Anderson issued a statement from Wilson on Wednesday detailing what the BOC says happened on Monday:

"Per the report filed, the officer assigned to the lockdown unit was supervising the recreation of detainee Shaquan Prentice. During the course of the recreation period the detainee informed the officer that another detainee Juan Illaraza was requesting his assistance. The officer travelled to the detainee Illaraza's cell to inquire about his needs and was attacked via the food slot. The officer was then attacked by detainee Prentice with a stick which struck him in the right temple. While losing his balance, the cell keys dropped from his possession and were retrieved by detainee Prentice who then opened the cell doors of the other detainee cells.

"An officer from the adjacent unit heard the disturbance and immediately assisted the assaulted officer by helping him out of the unit to safety, locked the unit and a called for additional back up," the Director added. "The detainees who were let out of their cells lit mattresses on fire and flooded the unit, which at this time was filled with smoke. Upon arrival of reinforcements to the unit visibility was hindered. Via tactical protocols, the situation was quelled, the leaders of the fracas were identified as well as several instigators, which included Prentice, Illaraza and four others. GGACF's medical personnel were immediately on the scene to assess any injuries to the officer and detainees. The assaulted officer and detainees, Pedro Davis, Ali Benjamin and N'Kosi Parris, were then taken to the emergency room at the Juan F. Luis Hospital for further assessment and have all been released," Director Wilson said.

"The 9Alpha Unit is a segregation unit that houses detainees that consistently fail to follow the rules of the institution. There were a total of 16 detainees housed at the time of the incident. And only six of the 16 were found to be involved in the disturbance. Detainee Shaquan Prentice was arrested for assault, and detainees Benjamin and Parris have been transferred to the Criminal Justice Complex on St. Thomas pending the outcome of this ongoing investigation.

"The officer is said to be in satisfactory condition, but is on leave seeking further medical attention.

