

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Resignations Pour In As DOJ Upheaval Continues

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After *VI Consortium* reported on the purported "[open revolt](#)" and "turmoil" at the Department of Justice (DOJ) in St. Thomas last Friday, the story continues to unfold as two Department of Justice prosecutors resigned on Tuesday and Wednesday, one a senior attorney who has prosecuted high-profile criminal cases and has been at the DOJ for almost three decades.

Douglas Sprotte resigned his position as senior criminal prosecutor Tuesday when he was informed he had been reassigned to the Division of Paternity and Child Support. The transfer, people with intimate knowledge of the situation tell *VI Consortium*, had to do with Sprotte allegedly being the author of a letter about conditions at the DOJ on behalf of the employees and addressed to popular St. Thomas radio personality, Lee Carl.

The letter detailed staff grievances and expressed dismay at former Judge Soraya Diase-Coffelt's resignation from her position as acting Attorney General, while underscoring respect for Diase-Coffelt's decision, and her unwillingness to be "bullied" by others into choosing her managers and some of her staff at the DOJ.

These people tell *VI Consortium* the new acting Attorney General, Terri Griffiths, who has replaced Diase-Coffelt, conducted an investigation to find out who wrote the letter, with the evidence leading to Sprotte.

Sprotte, however, has not admitted to writing the letter, which can be read [here](#).

The letter to Mr. Carl is also reproduced directly below.

Dear Mr. Carl,

We the employees of the Department of Justice are in a state of shock after becoming aware that our new Attorney General Soraya Diase-Coffelt has resigned after one week. This department, after experiencing eight years of failed leadership, look forward to embracing new leadership and we are truly disappointed that Judge Diase-Coffelt thought it best to leave us. There are many serious issues to be addressed in this department, and we have faith in her abilities, but we understand that she has morale standards that she must adhere to.

We understand that she wanted to make certain changes, but it appeared that some people wanted business to run the same as usual. We made recommendations to her and we believe she was going to make some necessary changes, and she was not given the authority to do what she thought was best for our department.

Politics is hard but we respect that she will not be bullied by others into choosing her managers and some of her staff at the DOJ. Attorney Diase-Coffelt brought in Kevin Rodriguez, who is well qualified, however he is gone because of politics. Solicitor General Bernard Van Sluytman was given a pink slip, and immediately after, we lost an attorney who decided that she couldn't stay after that poor decision. Our Chief Deputy Attorney General, Wayne Anderson, was also given a pink slip and this was another bad decision. Turmoil at the Department of Justice! Who is listening to this department?

We are attaching a letter to the Mapp-Potter transition team that clearly spelled out all of our concerns. We believe that she agreed with our concerns and was about to make tough decisions but she was not allowed to do so. It's a shame.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely the staff of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice.

In his resignation letter, Sprotte said he must consider the effects the reassignment to a different division would have on his career.

"As a 27-year prosecutor, with jury selections scheduled next week, you can imagine what a surprise this is to me. I understand that the office must do what it feels best for the majority of its staff as well as the people of the Virgin Islands, but must also consider the effects on my own career."

On Wednesday, criminal prosecutor Hillary Krepistman also resigned her position, and Governor Mapp accepted it, along with that of Sprotte. The two join other prosecutors who either resigned or were given pink slips by the Mapp administration.

It was just last Thursday that Diase-Coffelt resigned her post as Attorney General designee. People with intimate knowledge of the circumstances surrounding her resignation told *VI Consortium* hours before Coffelt announced her resignation was because the former gubernatorial candidate refused to allow Griffiths to join her team. However, Randy Knight, the governor's chief of staff, insisted that Griffiths join the team. In fact, Knight walked Griffiths to the Attorney General's office prior to her appointment, these people said.

In accepting Diase-Coffelt's resignation, Governor Mapp said, "It is indeed unfortunate that we were unable to resolve the staffing personnel issues prior to this resignation. I wish Ms. Diase-Coffelt well in her future endeavors."

Sprotte prosecuted major crimes over the years and DOJ people *VI Consortium* spoke to say his absence will be felt in the department.

VI Consortium will continue to cover this story as it unfolds.