

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mother Of Man Murdered On Boardwalk Speaks Out: 'I've Come This Far By Faith'

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ST. CROIX -- On the morning of Saturday, May 17, a [dreadful incident](#) occurred on the Christiansted boardwalk that left one man dead and multiple others injured. According to police reports, the suspects were shooting at each other near the Caravelle Hotel, firing over 40 shots and damaging a Chevrolet S-10 truck parked near Cruzan Scooters.

The deceased was identified as Blaine Gerard, 26, the son of Jacqueline Greenidge-Payne, St. Croix district training officer for the Emergency Medical Service (EMS), a division of the Department of Health (DOH).

Greenidge-Payne, who was being interviewed by *VI Consortium* in relation to EMS Week -- which takes place from May 17-23, where the importance of the service is highlighted -- opened up about the events that unfolded after her son's death.

Standing just outside a tent setup to host high school students at the Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital, where DOH's offices are stationed, Greenidge-Payne spoke of being able to stand in the midst of tragedy.

"I stand in a difficult time because guess what, in unity there is strength, and I've come this far by faith," she said.

Greenidge-Payne said the discussion around the unfortunate situation has mainly been about her parenting skills, with some insinuating that she hasn't been a good mother because of the Saturday incident.

But the EMS professional for over 20 years and mother of nine, begs to differ.

"I have nine children, but the media did not put out there that all my children graduated from school. I have a daughter who graduated summa cum laude (with the highest distinction) from Howard University. I have a son who is a professor at Benedict University, I have a daughter who is a paralegal at the National Security Agency in Columbia, Maryland. And it's bad that I give so much to this community and what I'm hearing is, 'oh, you're out there saving lives and your child doing whatever.'"

Greenidge-Payne said her son not once went to jail for what he's been accused of, and stated that persecution is coming her way because of her son's own decisions.

"But you know what, they can't rob my joy because that's not who I am, and I'm not going to fall down, roll over and die," she said. "I'm going to continue being who I am because I might have nine children but I have a lot of other children who have adopted me as their mother, who look up to me, and if I fall apart, many people are going to fall apart."

Greenidge-Payne said she is the one who keeps her family united, so breaking down is not an option.

Indeed, looking at her address the high school students gathered underneath the tent, explaining the various tasks that EMS employees undertake, there was no evidence of a mother who had lost a son. She smiled and laughed with the students, and encouraged them to join the EMS field.

Greenidge-Payne said her son's funeral will be private because she's trying to steer away from the confusion of police showing up to the funeral, fearing the breakout of more violence.

"My son grew up in Sion Farm, his grandmother lives in Mon Bijou and he lives in Mon Bijou, so this isn't nothing about turf war; he was known in both places," she said. "But we come to conclusions before we get the evidence, and people go by what's first said, but I don't operate like that."

Yet, despite her strength, Greenidge-Payne said it's been difficult at times, telling *VI Consortium* that she's trying her best to cope.

As for the incident, the VIPD's investigation continues according to Kevin Jackson, the department's public information officer. The original press release stated that 4 of the victims were receiving treatment from the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, however their current conditions remain unknown.

Feature Image: Jacqueline Greenidge-Payne addressing high school students underneath a tent at the Charles Harwood Memorial Hospital in Christiansted.

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