

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Shot To Death In St. John Was Perpetrator Of Recent Machete Stabbing

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ST. JOHN -- VIPD Commissioner Delroy Richards has repeatedly said that a majority of the homicides occurring in the territory are retaliatory, as former victims exact revenge on their offenders.

"Most shootings are retaliatory in nature. The victims are targeted and the acts are carried out when the opportunity presents itself. Victims who survive these acts of violence will invoke the code of silence, [and] will not come forward despite those crimes being committed in the presence of many of them," Richards [told](#) *VI Consortium* in February.

The commissioner's explanation for the uptick in crime activity in the territory seemed to have played out on Friday, May 29 in St. John, when Kenson Jolly, 25, of Estate Pastory Gardens, [was found dead](#), slumped over in a patio chair with multiple gunshot wounds to his body.

Jolly, however, is not a resident who has never been involved in violent criminal activity.

On February 18, Jolly was arrested on first degree assault charges in connection with a [stabbing incident that occurred that evening](#), according to VIPD Public Information Officer, Kevin Jackson.

Police officers were dispatched to Cruz Bay at around 9:21 p.m. that night with reports of a stabbing. The assailant was described as a black male, wearing black clothing and carrying a machete.

Officers discovered Rupert Walters, the victim, bleeding from multiple stab wounds. Minutes later, after searching the surrounding area, officers encountered a bloodied Jolly, who matched the description of the suspect.

Jolly was placed under arrest after being positively identified by a witness as the individual that assaulted Walters. His bail was set at \$110,000 and he has been remanded to the Bureau of Corrections for his advise-of-rights hearing.

Jolly was released back into the community, leading to his death last Friday.

Police say their investigation into the homicide continues, and although Walters was a victim of Jolly, police have not released any information that points towards Walters. Furthermore, Walters may not have been Jolly's only victim; therefore drawing conclusions at this time would be premature.

But this situation brings to light Richards' understanding of crime activity in the territory. The commissioner also said that the VIPD has had a hard time gleaning information from witnesses.

"Fear is a key factor in witnesses' refusal to provide information. Most, if not all, victims are suspected perpetrators that were institutionalized at some point or the other," the commissioner said.

"This makes the police job even more difficult, because now we have to depend solely on forensic evidence, which takes some time to be analyzed because we definitely have to send them off island. So, it takes a while before we get a return of the results of whoever it is."

Richards said despite being arrested and charged, "many of these perpetrators who commit violent acts walk away from the courts, after witnesses and earlier statements are rescinded, and identification provided to the police are disputed."

In closing, the commissioner sought to provide comfort to residents with a commitment to step up the VIPD's efforts.

"This police department will continue to step up its efforts, territorial-wise," he said. "I made it clear from the beginning [that] I have been through this before, and I know that

we can put a dent in the violent crimes that we are having in this territory."

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