

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Governor De Jongh Arraignment Set For Thursday In St. Thomas

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Ernice Gilbert **August 31, 2015**



ST. THOMAS -- The arraignment of Governor John P. de Jongh, arrested on government corruption charges on August 18, along with Julito Francis, former director of the Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority, will be held on Thursday, Sept. 3 at the Magistrate Division located in the Barbel Plaza, VI Consortium can confirm.

An arraignment is a criminal proceeding at which the defendant is officially called before a court of competent jurisdiction, informed of the offense charged in the complaint, information, indictment, or other charging document, and asked to enter a plea of guilty, not guilty, or as otherwise permitted by law.

The men were arrested on two counts of embezzlement of public monies and neglecting to pay over public funds in violation of Virgin Islands criminal code, according to Walker.

Following the AG's announcement on the high profile arrests, The Consortium asked Walker if the DOJ would continue down the path of fighting corruption in government.

[AG Claude Walker announcing arrest of former Gov. John P. de J...](#)

"We will have a robust public corruptions division," Walker stated. "I formerly worked in the white collar public corruption section and I'm familiar with the perception and the issues that the public have with public corruption in the territory."

Walker also said that the territory's department of justice must also lead in the area of fighting such crimes, adding that "everything is not simply to refer to the federal government. Although they have a role to play, we also have our responsibility as the people's advocates to ensure that money that belongs to the people is properly spent as directed by the legislature."

The AG said he could not confirm or deny whether they were working on other cases aside from yesterday's arrests. And when asked about the federal government's seeming lack of involvement in the case, especially as it wrote the audit in regards to de Jongh repaying the GVI the funds spent to refurbish his home, Walker said the question would have to be directed to the feds.

"I'm not sure why," he admitted, "but we have our obligation to carry out our responsibilities and where we find violations of the law we have to act independently and take action."

Walker refused to answer whether the federal government collaborated on the case, and declined to make known if it had prior knowledge of the arrests. "What I can say is that we are capable of handling these types of cases, investigating and prosecuting them. This is not the first time we've had a public corruption case of significance in the territory. We know how to do it. We have an experienced staff of prosecutors and investigators."

Asked if there would be convictions as a result of the arrests, Walker said while he believes the DOJ has a "very strong case, it's up to the jury to decide whether to convict and we have to allow it to play out."

He added: "But we believe in our case."

Correction: September 1, 2015

A previous version of this story, because of a text error, incorrectly stated that date of former Governor John P. de Jongh's arraignment was set for September 13, when the correct date is September 3 -- this Thursday. In fact, September 13 is a Sunday. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.