

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Left For Dead: 73-Year-Old Carjacking Victim Cannot Speak, See Or Do Anything, Perpetrators Still On The Loose

VIC News / **Published On September 18, 2015 10:28 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **September 18, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- Senior Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church Anthony Benjamin held a brief press conference at the David E. Hamilton Jackson park in Grove Place on Thursday, where 73-year-old Deacon Agustus Bannis had been beaten unconscious while gathering almonds on Monday, August 17 after 11 a.m.

The event was organized, Mr. Benjamin said, because Thursday marked a month since the near-fatal incident, yet no updates had been given from law enforcement in relation to the apprehension of suspects. Mr. Benjamin was also calling on the community to share

what they know with him or law enforcement, so justice could be served.

"One month ago today, a 73-year-old man was carjacked, beaten and left for dead while gathering almonds in this very park," Mr. Benjamin began. "One month later, he is still fighting for his life in a Miami, Florida hospital, unable to do anything for himself."



Samaritan, who saw him non-responsive on night have been dead."

Calvary Baptist Church Deacon Augustus

Bannis ministering.

Mr. Benjamin said that it was a very difficult time for members of the Calvary Baptist Church, where Bannis served as a deacon. And it remains even more punishing for his family, who "cry themselves to sleep at nights not knowing if life as they knew if will ever be the same."

"Their faith in God is what they are relying on to make it through each day," Mr. Benjamin added. He asked the community to continually pray for the family, and again urged people with knowledge of the incident to come forth.

Bannis' car has not been recovered. Detectives continue to investigate the case.

Timeline of Events

At 11 a.m. Monday, August 17 Bannis had taken the short five-minute drive from his Estate Upper Love home to the David Hamilton Jackson park in Grove Place to gather almonds, a favorite pastime of his. He left his cellphone and wallet at home.

Around 2 p.m. when Bannis had not returned home, his wife alerted relatives. At round 4 p.m., she informed the church secretary that her husband had not returned from Grove Place earlier in the day. Church members called the hospital to inquire if Bannis had

been admitted. Hospital personnel did not release any information to the family and instructed them to call 911. Church members also searched the Grove Place neighborhood where Bannis had gone, but did not find any signs of the man or his car.

After Bannis' family members filed a police report late Monday night, police put out an all-points bulletin (APB) for the victim at around 9:30 p.m. Within minutes of the APB being issued, Pastor Benjamin received a call on his cellphone that Bannis had been carjacked and brought badly beaten to the Juan Luis Hospital earlier that day.

At the hospital on Monday night, family members were notified that Bannis was found at the park at around 12 p.m. severely beaten and was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

Sources close to the victim's family say Bannis remains unconscious with severe head and face injuries. His turquoise older model Chevy Cavalier has not been recovered.

Anyone with information regarding this incident should call 911.

Feature Image: Deacon Augustus Bannis.

Image Credit: Calvary Baptist Church.