

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Crafting Relief In My Environment

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As a young professional born and raised in St. Thomas, who attended both parochial and public schools, I am deeply saddened by the many acts of greed, jealousy, hatred and disrespect for one another. In addition, I believe some of the people of the Virgin Islands may have forgotten the pain our ancestors had to bare to escape the depths of slavery...the many hours of toiling in the sun, being beaten, raped and held against one's will.

My questions are, (1) When will we all be able to live in peace and harmony in a Territory that was once free of the heinous violent acts that exist today?, and (2) Is it the will of the members of this community to disassociate themselves from each other and forget the importance and value of living? I say this to indicate that we as human beings need to

live and communicate with one another wherein the quality of our lives are much more dependent on our relationships with each other, and without good relationships it will be quite challenging to have peace and harmony.

As a son of the soil, I have made a decision to assist the Virgin Islands Police Department, the elected team of Senators and the people of the Virgin Islands with more propelled ways to perhaps minimize the overly high crime rate in the territory. Also, countless research-based studies have indicated that there are many ways individuals can take to control and help prevent crime in their home, in their neighborhood, and at local schools. However, I have come to the realization that it's a matter of communication, commitment, and time to seek relief for my entire family...the people of the Virgin Islands. Nevertheless, as I start the process for what I call "Crafting Relief In My Environment" (CRIME), individuals viewing this list of faith will find below a compilation of several ways to start combating crime in our Virgin Islands community, which is at an all-time high.

Situational Prevention Tactics. I believe that an implementation of various measures broadly designed to improve physical and social disorder in target areas should be immediately initiated.

Reducing Social Impact of Misdemeanor Crimes. It is my belief that the Virgin Islands Police Department should implement tactics relative to the use of consistent order maintenance techniques including assisting the courts with recommendations based on personal knowledge of environmental and circumstantial contributing factors that would aid in reducing the financial burden incurred by increased arrest and jail time for misdemeanor law violations. The Police Department must rebuild trust in the community.

Social service actions. It is my belief that established organizations should form a team or task force that would develop better programs to provide our youth with recreational and job opportunities, work with local shelters to provide housing for homeless individuals, and connecting problem tenants to mental health services.

Take bullying seriously. I think that the elected team of Senators should work with the Virgin Islands Department of Education to realize the existence of the "Law and You" instructional program throughout the entire school system curriculum, which I strongly believe is one of the many ways to combat bullying and create a generation of better-adjusted students.

Collecting DNA. The Virgin Islands Police Department with the assistance of the Delegate to Congress should forge links with federal data bases which would positively impact the implementation of DNA based evidence tactics to aid investigations which has a potential to create a more just system. This would mean aiding a team of local officers to receive training in specialized forensic sciences.

Sentencing for Crime. The elected team of Senators should work closely with the Justices of the Supreme Court and the Judges of Superior Court to revise laws which will seek to make sentencing fit the crime, not the criminal.

Secure living-wage employment for ex-offenders. The Virgin Islands Department of Labor should work on creating mechanisms which will contextually assist in the efforts of

providing well-paying jobs to returning prisoners ensuring that they remain crime-free once returning to their respective communities.

Neighborhood Watch. Crime is a social problem, the elected team of Senators along with the Government of the Virgin Islands should orchestrate the creation of district watch programs in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Police Department and local community organizations, which will aid as deterrence for burglaries and law violations. "A Trusted Neighbor is a vigilant eye".

Resident generated signage. The Virgin Islands Police Department with the assistance of the Economic Development Authority should work to create a crime-related campaign fund which seeks to promote neighborhood marking and signs such as "We Don't Accept Crime Here", "Crime Free Zone".

Deflecting Offenders. I believe that Home owners and landlords should start utilizing principles of crime prevention to improve security around homes and/or businesses. In closing, I truly believe that the underlying problem to our crime situation in our community speaks to the fact that we must denounce acts of greed, jealousy, hatred and disrespect and move towards creating an intellectual climate that engage peace, love and harmony. Change comes from within so we must change the mindset of our people as we build a brighter community.

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