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'It's Everybody Against Racism': Motorcade, Candlelight Vigil Held on St. Croix for George Floyd

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Protesters in Frederiksted Following a Motorcade in Honor of George Floyd. By. CHALANA BROWN

ST. CROIX — "It ain't a matter of white against black, it's everybody against racism," said Rick Cormier, a childhood friend of George Floyd speaking during a protest for Mr. Floyd Thursday on St. Croix. Mr. Cormier happened to be on the island working at Limetree Bay when Mr. Floyd, a black man, was murdered by a white police officer on May 25 in Minneapolis. Mr. Cormier couldn't return home because of Covid-19, but he said he was pleased to see that an event had been organized in memory of his friend, and after reaching out to the organizers he immediately joined.

The gruesome death sparked worldwide outrage and led to mostly peaceful protests in all the 50 states of America, and spanned the globe in places such as Canada, Germany, England, France and many other countries.

Back on St. Croix, lead event organizer Iba Franco, said she had watched the video of Mr. Floyd's murder and could not stop crying, and was deeply moved to put together a function. However, what started as an idea for a small gathering quickly swelled as people from all walks of life — they themselves hurt after watching a human being die by the hand of police officers, one whose knee rested on the man's neck for 8 minutes and 45 seconds, even as the man cried out for helping saying, "I can't breathe," and called for his mother who had died two years earlier — joined the protest.



Protesters in Frederiksted Following a Motorcade in Honor of George Floyd (Chalana Brown)

Organizers said they counted 60 vehicles in the motorcade, but it felt like there were a lot more as participants left the Canegata Ballpark and made their way to the parking lot at Fort Frederik in Frederiksted.

The event, like those around the world, boasted a diverse crowd of black, white, hispanic and other nationalities, many holding banners that spoke against racism. They honked their horns and screamed words like, 'no justice, no peace' as the vehicles streamed into the parking lot. Others stood through vehicles with open tops holding signs in what was a peaceful yet powerful reminder of how strongly the killing of Mr. Floyd has impacted people.

Once at the parking lot, a number of speakers gave remarks as the crowd listened. Later, a candlelight vigil was held in memory of Mr. Floyd and the recent killings in the territory, including the 19-year-old woman [who was shot while searching for an apartment with her mother](#).

"We all know that the unfortunate death of George Floyd is a reminder that police brutality and racism is still alive and well in America," said Samuel Carrion, a radio personality and former senior policy advisor to former Governor Kenneth Mapp. "But I think that all of us here tonight and all over the world, we have a responsibility, and the responsibility is we cannot allow his death to be in vain."



Mr. Cormier, the longtime friend of Mr. Floyd, said he saw Mr. Floyd as a "gentle giant".

"I'm [6 feet 3 inches tall] so imagine a guy probably about 6'6" tall and 250 pounds. He was a big guy who always acted like he was my protector, my bodyguard anywhere we went — and that's how he was with everybody," said Mr. Cormier.

Pausing for a moment as if still trying to come to grips with the reality of Mr. Floyd's death, Mr. Cormier scratched and shook his head in seeming disbelief. He was swiftly encouraged by the crowd and moments later a friend came near to console him. "I just wanted to say it ain't a matter of white against black, it's everybody against racism because it exists. It's right there under our nose. You got to be prepared for it. We got to teach our kids; you got to pray for your kids because I don't see it going away no time soon.

"But we can make a stand, and I feel like the situation that happened with Floyd, it set the tone. The biggest civil rights movement since I don't know when but it set the tone and it's letting them know that we're not running; we're not hiding. We are here and we're going to be here," Mr. Cormier said.