

The Virgin Islands Consortium

How Do Guns Come Into The Territory? Who's Bringing Them In? Commissioner Richards Explains

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Police Commissioner Delroy Richards

ST. CROIX -- At a V.I.P.D. press briefing held on this island today, Police Commissioner Delroy Richards Sr., responding to a question posed by The Consortium, explained in full how most guns come into the territory, and who was responsible for bringing them here.

His account is reproduced below in italics and verbatim:

"For some time now we were very well aware that firearms were being shipped to this territory by legal means. Everybody was focusing on the containers and postal service,

and even in those areas, customs, the postal inspectors -- everybody was looking at those areas.

"But then we saw the breach. And the breach is this: The way the law is written -- not locally, but abroad -- you buy a firearm off-island, you go to your airlines and TSA [Transportation Security Administration] on the mainland, and what you do is you declare it, so you are legal so far.

"It comes to the territory. When you get off the plane, what you have to deal with in the territory is sought of like an honesty situation where, as you get into the territory, you have to then take that weapon to the police department and report that you have a gun.

"But there is no one or no information that's provided to the police that would tell us that the guy that just picked up his bag with 20 guns has in fact traveled and we have no way of monitoring him.

"So we rely on just the honor system, that's why we have guns on the streets. They are being legally declared.

"Now, you might ask, 'aren't TSA and some of these agencies aware that these guys are traveling with the firearms?' And my response is yes. They are in fact aware. I have reached out to them and said to them, 'I realize that one of the reasons why abroad there is no mention of firearms coming into the territory, it's because everybody talks about everybody's second amendment rights. That's good up there, but the fact remains that I need to know. Because when the guns come into the territory, they are not being registered with the police department. They end up on the streets and that's how they're coming in large numbers.

"And when you decide to apprehend someone who failed to report and you do a trace on that individual, then you find out that that same individual made similar purchases in the past by quantity and none of it was ever reported to the police department.

"But they come to the territory; they get rich. But guess who's doing this: Our people in the territory. Our people who live abroad, who either go to the military -- some of them -- and traveling back home, bring these quantities of guns, pick them up in their duffel bags, never report it to the police, sell them on the streets and then leave the island with a pocket full of money. That's why we have so many guns on the street to an extent, because it's easy to come by."

A bill sponsored by Senator Tregenza A. Roach, which has been signed into law by Governor Kenneth Mapp, is requiring that all weapons coming into the territory be registered locally. Read more [here](#).