

The Virgin Islands Consortium

No New Update Yet On East End Road Rape Incident, Commissioner Says; \$40K Reward Still Up For Grabs

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ST. CROIX -- Virgin Islands Police Department Commissioner, Delroy Richards, told The Consortium on Wednesday that while the East End Road rape incident that occurred last week remains an active investigation, there was no new information to update the community with relative to the case's progress.

The last major update came [four days after the incident](#), during a press conference at the force's Frederiksted headquarters. Mr. Richards revealed that the V.I.P.D. had in its possession the vehicle allegedly used to perpetrate the crime. The announcement represented a major breakthrough in the case, with Mr. Richards expressing confidence that the force would be successful in its pursuit of bringing the criminals to justice.

“We are not going to leave any stone unturned; if you’re out there and you’re hearing my voice, I suggest you turn yourself in,” Mr. Richards warned, aiming his ultimatum to the still at-large criminals. “We’re going to find you and we’re going to bring you in.”

The commissioner said the incident had touched him personally. “We’re talking about two young ladies in the prime of their lives, who did nothing wrong. They were viciously accosted and sexually assaulted,” Mr. Richards said, expressing sentiments [he relayed to The Consortium the Monday following the incident](#).

“We’re going to pursue, and we’re going to apprehend those perpetrators that were involved in this particular case,” he said.

The commissioner revealed that he sought both technical and investigatory help from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and confirmed that the bureau has joined forces with the V.I.P.D. “This is now a joint investigation between the local police department and our federal partners,” he said.

Chief Investigator on the case, Naomi Joseph, revealed that three black male were identified as suspects, with their ages ranging from 20s to early 30s. One of the suspects used a handgun during the crime to accost the rape victim, according to police. The handgun was not discharged, however.

DNA samples were collected on the rape victim, but Det. Joseph said at the time that the V.I.P.D. was working to collect as much evidence as possible before sending the kit out for results.

The community has “overwhelmingly” provided the V.I.P.D. with information, Mr. Richards said, stating that residents have been calling on a daily basis to relay details — some of which include vehicles fitting the description of the truck allegedly used in the crime.

Crime Stoppers USVI, during the same press conference, announced that the anonymous tips service was offering over \$40,000 to anyone who provides information leading to the arrest the suspect or suspects involved in rape. That amount is still up for grabs as the case remains unsolved.

As for the truck, Mr. Richards said it was reported stolen. Asked whether it was reported stolen by its owner, the commissioner described the situation as thorny.

“It gets complicated, so I would prefer to just simply say that the vehicle was reported stolen. We know who the owner is, we’ve spoken to the owner, so like I said, the investigation in this matter will continue,” Mr. Richards said.

Asked whether there was an uptick in crime in the territory, or whether it was simply a case of more coverage, Mr. Richards said he believed crime incidents have become more public than ever because of more news coverage — a new reality he said he has no problem with. “Crime in general has been more public than ever because of just that. I think it’s being reported more and I don’t have an issue with that. I think people need to know. People need to know the facts and if we keep folks in the dark, they’re going to assume. So I believe in reporting all incidents so that the public can know what’s going on,” Mr. Richards said.

The case will see the involvement of federal officers [who were recently given peace officer status in the territory](#), Mr. Richards confirmed. But he said the V.I.P.D. has always sought the aid of its federal partners, suggesting that this case was not unique in that regard.

“I think the objective of this police department and the various federal partners, is to bring this case to closure, and I would use whatever resources that’s to my fingertips to reach that goal,” Mr. Richards said.

The commissioner said rumors making the rounds on social media about a similar incident that ostensibly occurred in Sunny Isle, were not true.

Feature Image: From left to right: St. Croix Police Chief Winsbut McFarland, Chief Detective Naomi Joseph, and Police Commissioner Delroy Richards. (Ernice Gilbert, VIC)