

The Virgin Islands Consortium

A St. Croix Woman Living In Arizona Was Allegedly Murdered By Her Boyfriend; Her Parents Want To Turn The Tragedy Into Something Positive

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She was an athlete. She was a visual artist. She was a dancer who carried a reputable grin. Now, after an unnatural series of events, the 22-year-old's parents plan her funeral and endeavor to make sure what happened to their daughter happens to no one else.

Virgin Islander Jazmine Willock and her boyfriend, 27-year-old Taris Ford-Dillard, were found lifeless in their Arizona home on Jan. 18. Earlier, Willock's employer had asked police to make a welfare check after she didn't show up for work.

He stole her spirit.

According to the Tucson Police Department, both were pronounced dead on the scene. Though investigations are still ongoing, police believe Ford-Dillard shot and killed Willock before shooting himself.

A History of Domestic Violence



She knew the moment he met Ford-Dillard that he had already fallen deeply in love.

Jazmine Willock

“He stole her spirit,” Willock said in a phone interview. “The controlling personality, not letting her speak, checking with him before she makes a comment – it just progressed.”

In July, Ford-Dillard was indicted on four counts of assault, domestic violence, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, and kidnapping, according to a [KVOA Tucson](#) news report. The report cites an interim complaint where the victim recounted that Ford-Dillard had held her in a headlock and hit her in the face with a shoe after the two had gotten into an argument. He later grabbed a black, semi-automatic handgun and began threatening her with it.

Willock said both he and other family members tried to counsel his daughter out of the abusive relationship. There was even a restraining order against Ford-Dillard.

“But two months later, she let him back into her home,” Willock said. “She loved him.”

Fondly Remembered

Ms. Willock is fondly remembered by those she encountered through her athletic, artistic, and personal life. At one point, she represented the Virgin Islands on its national soccer team. Her art skills also landed her first place in the 2013 Congressional Art Competition during her senior year at the Good Hope Country Day School.

It’s hard to understand that somebody would want to hurt her.

As a competitive Track and Field athlete, Willock represented the Virgin Islands at the Central American and Caribbean Age Group Championships in the Bahamas in 2009. She was also the Under-20 winner for the Virgin Islands Cross Country Championships in 2012. She was a member of the St. Croix Track Club (STXTC).



Willock as “extraordinary, talented, extremely pleasant.”

Jazmine Willock

Knowledge of her pleasant nature, STXTC Coach Mireille Smith said, makes the circumstances of her death even more shocking.

“She was so loving and unselfish; it’s hard to understand that somebody would want to hurt her,” Smith said over the phone. “If she was really in love with that guy, that means she would do anything for him.”

Moving Forward

George Willock began a GoFundMe fundraiser the day after his daughter’s death, asking for assistance with the funeral arrangements. The initial goal was to raise \$15,000, but the family has since bypassed this goal. There will be a burial in Arizona on Saturday, but her parents are still hoping to raise enough funds to host a memorial in St. Croix, where she grew up. Eventually, they’re also hoping to turn something tragic into something humanitarian – using her death to raise awareness and support for similar domestic violence victims.

“No parent should have to plan their child’s funeral,” Willock said.

Those interested in supporting the Willock family monetarily can do so via the GoFundMe page (<https://www.gofundme.com/memorial-jazmine-carolann-willock>) or via PayPal (by sending to willockgeorge@gmail.com).

Written By Wyndi Ambrose, special to VI Consortium

