

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman Charged With Negligent Homicide And D.U.I. Will Likely Face Jail Time, Police Commissioner Says

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ST. CROIX -- A woman charged with negligent homicide and driving under the influence after crashing into a vehicle that wound up taking the lives of a mother and her unborn child, will likely face jail time, V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards told The Consortium Thursday.

The commissioner said the matter was turned over to the V.I. Department of Justice, which is responsible for prosecuting the case.

"I've known people to get convicted, especially for driving under the influence. I know that they've been sentenced and served time in jail," Mr. Richards said. Relative to historical

length of sentencing for such incidents, the commissioner said he's seen convicts serve five years in jail for negligent homicide in the U.S. Virgin Islands, but, "I've never seen anything like a 20-year or 25-year sentence," he added.

On the U.S. mainland, the sentencings are sometimes much harsher. Just yesterday in Texas, [a young woman was sentenced to 14 years in prison](#) for intoxication manslaughter and intoxication assault.

The length of time served by the suspect of the April 6 incident, identified as [46-year-old Stephanie Ziegler](#), could be longer than historical rulings because of the suspect's demeanor following the incident, according to Mr. Richards. "You got a person who was arrested who just didn't really seem to show any remorse," Mr. Richards said. "She was smiling and even the police officer noticed her demeanor. There you have a woman standing there smiling, who is alleged to have committed a very heinous act. I mean you killed not just the passenger but you're also responsible for killing a young child."

The commissioner added: "The prosecution will present its case and argue the fact that here you had a person that was not only drunk, but was also driving on the wrong side of the road as a result of that, and created an accident -- and there's loss of life... I know the prosecutor is going to argue jail time."

According to V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Glen Dratte, Ms. Ziegler was charged with driving under the influence and negligent homicide after an auto collision on the Queen Mary Highway on Thursday, April 6, left a young mother and her unborn child dead.

Mr. Dratte said the incident occurred at 8:19 p.m. near the St. Croix Central High School and involved two vehicles. One vehicle, a Toyota Celica, which included the victims, was traveling east, and the other vehicle, a multicolored Ford Flex, was headed west.

But the individual driving the Ford Flex heading west, was doing so on the eastbound lane, according to Mr. Dratte. Ms. Ziegler, who was the driver of the westbound vehicle, was drunk, according to police. She crashed into the vehicle heading east, causing the victim — who was the passenger of the eastbound vehicle — to be ejected through the front windshield of the Toyota Celica. Mr. Dratte said the victim along with her unborn child, succumbed to injuries sustained during the impact of the collision.

The victim was identified as Fatima Brown, 25, according to Mr. Dratte. She was 10 weeks pregnant.