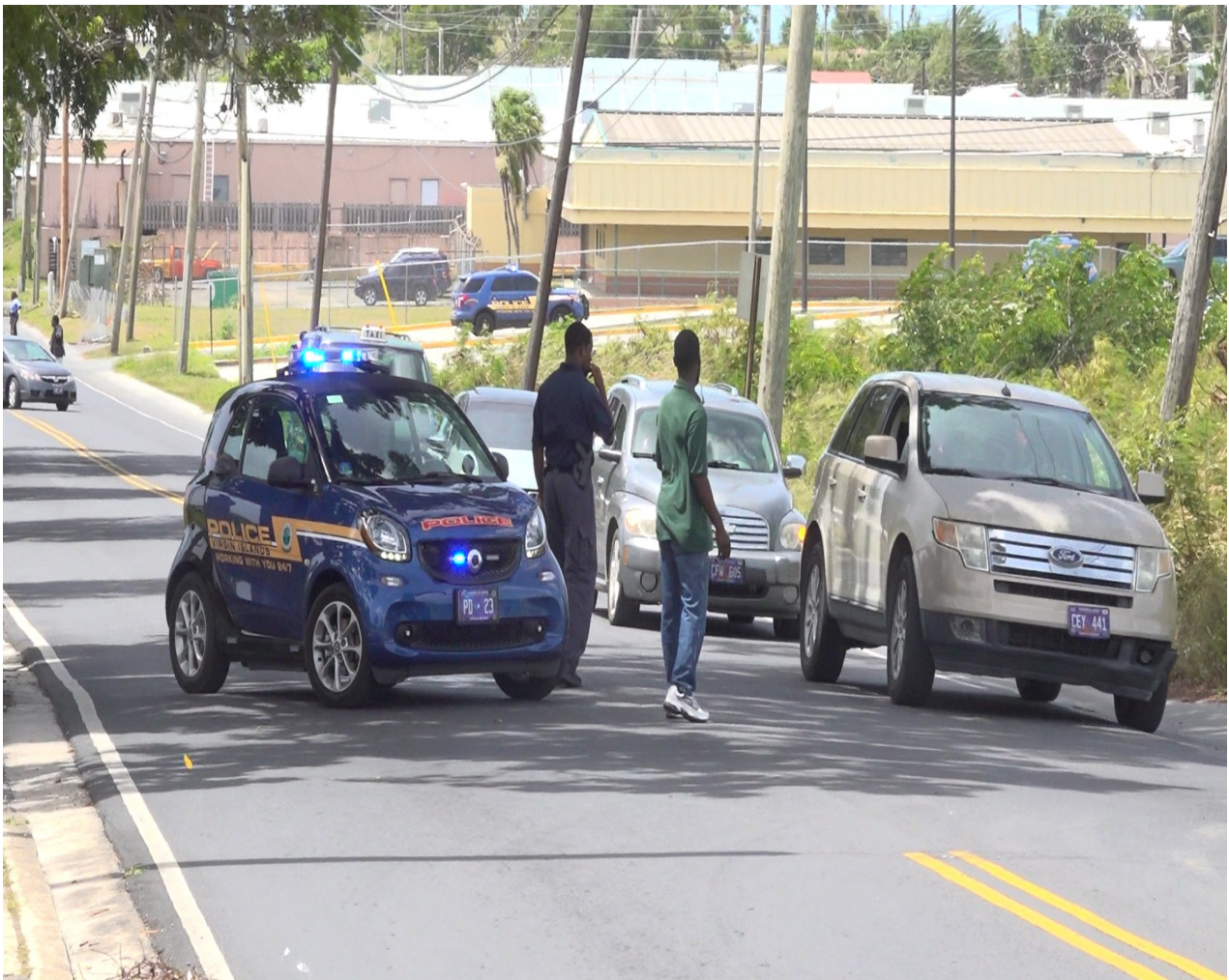


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Slams Camp For Pipe Bomb Ordeal: 'Why Is A Day Camp For Children Teaching Children To Make Pipe Bombs?'

VIC News / **Published On July 31, 2018 11:12 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **July 31, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp assailed the leaders of the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) camp during a press conference on Monday, for what the governor described as a disturbing situation that led to the halting of commerce and the evacuation of employees in the Sunny Annex on Friday, after a device resembling a pipe bomb was discovered in the middle of the road near Joe's Restaurant in Sunny Isle.

According to Police Commissioner Delroy Richards, the device was stuck underneath a vehicle at YWAM as part of a game, and wound up in the middle of the road near the

restaurant. Cherilyn Derusha, youth director at YWAM, confirmed to this publication that the device indeed came from the camp, and was made by camp staff as part of a game that is often played at the facility called "Behind Enemy Lines", which is essentially Capture the Flag.

Ms. Derusha apologized for the confusion in an official statement issued late Friday.

The governor, bewildered by the incident, questioned the motive of the camp's staff.

"Why is a day camp for children teaching children to make pipe bombs and then trying to find them, that they could hide them, that they could fall off a truck and create the kind of expense not only to the government, but to the businesses in that area that had to close for all of those hours? Restaurants were preparing food from early in the morning because of the crowd they have for launch time, only to be told at 9:00 a.m. you've got to close your restaurant, turn your stove off and get out of the building until the government can determine what kind of device that is.

"What is going on in a day camp with children that somehow that we could be making those kind of devices -- what is the lesson that could be learned? I'm not being rhetorical here, but that's almost like having a day camp and you're telling the children, 'today's project is we're going to learn to rob a bank, and we're going to find a bank and practice,'" the governor said.

While the making of fake pipe bombs and such devices by camp staff was ill-informed, the intent of the game was not to teach children to become professional bomb makers or terrorists. In Christianity, the devil, Satan, is referred to as the enemy, and resisting him is often described in war terms, hence the game "Behind Enemy Lines", which is similar to the war game "Capture the Flag".

There are two types of Capture the Flag war games: one flag and two flag games. In a one-flag game, there is a neutral flag/object in the center of the play area. One team has to take the item from the center point and place it at a marked point near the starting area of the enemy team. In a two-flag game, both teams have a flag/object allied to their respective teams near their starting area. The team has to get to the opponent's flag and take it to their home flag area before the opponent does the same with their flag.

At WYAM, the case could be made that the game was to help the children in the Christian camp develop their Christ-like defenses against the enemy, Satan. But things went terribly wrong when the device, a pipe bomb replica, which Commissioner Richards said looked real, wound up in the middle of the public road.

According St. Croix resident Richard Dorsey, one of the first individuals to spot the device in the middle of the road, it was hard to say whether the device was real or fake. "There were two to three metallic quarter inch pipes with metal caps on them, with red or orange electrical wiring coming out of the caps. It's wrapped in electrical tape with a black base at the bottom, with the wires coming from it," he said.

Some questioned whether it was a wise decision for camp staff to create such a device. And Governor Mapp expressed regret that local businesses had to lose money because of it. "Even if you cut out the government's cost, who pays the quantum cost of the losses to the activity that was going on in that area in terms of commerce, in terms of jobs and

those things?" Mr. Mapp said there needs to be a wider conversation on the things that children of the territory are being exposed to.

Mr. Richards said the matter has been turned over to the Department of Justice for further investigation to determine whether charges should be brought against the camp.

© Viconsortium 2026