

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Retaliation For Brother's Death Led To Thursday Night Shootout, V.I.P.D. Says; One Homicide Victim Was Said To Be Innocent Bystander

VIC News / **Published On December 01, 2018 10:14 AM /**

Staff **December 01, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- When 24-year-old Roland Bogan [was found dead on Thursday morning](#), it triggered what led to the seven-man shootout at the vegetable market in Frederiksted Thursday night, which left two men dead and five others injured.

That's according to Police Commissioner Delroy Richards, who said during a press briefing held at the V.I.P.D.'s Frederiksted headquarters on Friday, that one of the two men who died was Mr. Bogan's brother. The commissioner said Mr. Bogan's brother, identified as 32-year-old Humberto Martinez, was one of three suspects who exited a

vehicle and opened fire at individuals at the vegetable market just after the 9:00 p.m. hour. He said someone in the market at the time, whose identity the V.I.P.D. could not confirm, returned fire, which led to the death of Mr. Martinez. Two suspects are currently at large, the commissioner confirmed. He described the weapons used as high-powered firearms, including an AK-47.

The other man who died in the shootout, identified as 66-years-old Albertus Baptist, appeared to be an innocent bystander, according to the commissioner. "We believe Baptist was just someone hanging out at the market and was simply an innocent bystander," Mr. Richards said.

The five other individuals who were injured during the incident were receiving care, with at least one said to be in critical condition and had to be airlifted out of the territory for further attention.

According to the commissioner, Mr. Bogan was involved in the 2014 shooting death of Wellington Pennyfeather.

"We know that back in 2014 Mr. Bogan was charged with the homicide of [Wellington] Pennyfeather, and he was arrested also. I can't tell you the reason why he was still out, but I could say to you that police made a stop, he was in possession of a shotgun, and his response to the police was, 'I have this shotgun because I know the guys are looking for me.' And he was again arrested for that. So he was not a stranger to law enforcement, and I kind of believe that he knew that someone might have been watching him. And the other night I believe he was on his way home, and calls came in that there was a body, and he was found with multiple gunshot injuries," Mr. Richards said during the Thursday press briefing.

The V.I.P.D. said on Thursday that it was following every lead, and the commissioner urged the community to provide support to police. He said the V.I.P.D. alone cannot solve all the homicides in the territory, and stressed that those who know of criminals should contact the force, or if they are not comfortable with providing information to police, they should share what they know anonymously through Crime Stoppers USVI, [here](#).

"You had a lot of people around the market that night," Mr. Richards said. "The hardest thing for us at this point is to get folks to say I was there and this is what I saw. We have to develop this case on our own because people are not talking," the commissioner complained.

Mr. Richards said the local police department has also requested the support of its federal law enforcement partners to help with the case. And the commissioner, speaking to residents who may be fearful of attending upcoming [Crucian Christmas Festival](#) activities because of the shootings, stressed that the nature of the recent shootings was retaliatory and targeted, and not random.

To date, there have been 42 homicides territory-wide. St. Croix this year has had the most incidents with 30, compared to the St. Thomas-St. John District's 12 homicide incidents.

[In a statement issued on Friday night](#), Governor-elect Albert Bryan decried the violence, offered condolences to the aggrieved, and asked the community to join him in prayer for peace. The governor-elect also said he would host community-based meetings as a step to hone in on the deep-seated problems that have caused crimes to perpetuate.

"The recent wave of gun violence in our Virgin Islands community is intolerable. We are at a crisis point and can no longer afford to look the other way," Mr. Bryan said. "While I ask you to join me in prayer for peace and for the families and their loved ones affected, especially during the holiday season, I also call on our community to be vigilant and to step up and speak up."

"During our transition and in the first days of our administration, we will look at ways to facilitate community-based meetings to pinpoint the specific needs of our communities to make them safer and ways to provide additional support to our Virgin Islands Police and our justice department. We can no longer afford to ignore the systemic underpinnings which lead our young people to exact violence on each other as a means of conflict resolution," Mr. Bryan said.

The Virgin Islands Clergy Peace Coalition also issued a statement on Friday in response to the wave of deadly shootings that have affected St. Croix. And it announced a prayer vigil set to take place on Sunday for one hour beginning at 5:00 p.m.

The coalition has partnered with University of the Virgin Islands: Anti-Violence & Peace Initiative, and My Brother's Workshop Community and Police Association for the event. It has teamed up with at least a dozen ministers, all of whom are expected to attend the Sunday vigil.

"As a result of gun violence, our hearts are filled with sorrow for the families in our community as we mourn the loss of our children, friends, and loved ones who were recently shot and killed last evening in Frederiksted. This recent event is an important reminder of the urgency to address the ongoing acts of violence in our territory," reads a portion of the statement.

Feature Image: From left to right: Territorial Police Chief Winsbut McFarlane and V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards.