

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI Dept. of Justice, Feds Arrest 3 Sex Offenders On St. Croix

Crime / **Published On August 14, 2019 09:48 AM /**

Staff **August 14, 2019**



ST. CROIX -- A team of law enforcement personnel from local and federal agencies conducted an operation on Tuesday, which resulted in the apprehension of three sex offenders who were found not to be in compliance, V.I. Dept. of Justice Attorney General Denise George has announced.

Special agents from D.O.J.'s Special Investigations Division, program territorial investigator from the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) and agents from the U.S. Marshals Service, took the men into custody after executing arrest warrants signed by V.I. Superior Court Judge Daryl D. Donohue, said Corliss Smithen, D.O.J.'s public media officer.

The men – Omari Horton, 26; Felipe Felix, 58; and Wayne Graham, 60 – were each charged with a single count of failure to register as a sex offender and bail for each was set at \$25,000.

In 1997, the Virgin Islands enacted its first sex offender registration statute, and in 2006, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 was enacted by Congress, the department made known. Title I of that Act is known as the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act or SORNA. This Act established a new baseline standard for states to track sex offenders, which required more unity and cooperation amongst jurisdictions in the registration and notification process. The purpose of SORNA is “to protect children from sexual exploitation and violent crime, to prevent child abuse and child pornography, to promote Internet safety, and to honor the memory of Adam Walsh and other child crime victims.”

D.O.J. said it periodically conducts address verification sweeps of sexual offenders who reside, attend school and work in the territory in an effort to keep the USVI safe.

Within three business days of arriving at a new location, a registered sexual offender must notify D.O.J. of his/her name, residence, temporary lodging information, vehicle information, internet identifiers, telephone numbers, school information and employment status, the department said.

D.O.J. said that on July 18, 2012, amendments were made to the local sex offender statute and the Sexual Offender Registration and Community Protection Act was signed into law in the Virgin Islands.

Registered sexual offenders in the territory may be prosecuted for either failing to register or not keeping their registration current, as required by this law, and if convicted, the penalty is a fine of not less than \$3,000 nor more than \$5,000.00, or imprisonment for not less than three months nor more than two years, or both. The law also provides that it is an offense to assist a sex offender to evade the registration requirements, which carries a fine of not less than \$1,000.00 nor more than \$2,000.00, or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

Ms. George reminded the public that any person charged with a crime in the Virgin Islands is innocent until proven guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction.