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Men Who Brutally Murdered a 73-Year-Old Former Pastor in the Summer of 2015 Convicted of Murder, Other Charges

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Deceased Augustus Bannis. By. Calvary Baptist Church. St. Croix.

ST. CROIX -- [Enock Justin Cole](#) and [Avondale A. George, Jr.](#) were convicted on murder, assault and robbery charges in connection with the brutal murder of a 73-year-old man in 2015 in the vicinity of David Hamilton Jackson Park, Estate Grove Place, the Dept. of Justice has announced.

The Consortium first reported on Augustus Bannis's brutal murder in 2015. The victim did not die on the scene. Instead, he [passed after being airlifted for treatment in a Florida hospital.](#)

On Wednesday, the jury returned the verdict after deliberating for 45 minutes, finding Mr. Cole and Mr. George guilty of second-degree murder, first-degree assault, first degree robbery and unauthorized use of a vehicle stemming from the August 17, 2015 murder of Mr. Bannis.

The information states that Mr. Cole and Mr. George aided and abetted each other in the perpetration of a robbery, taking Mr. Bannis's vehicle against his will.

On that fateful day, the victim left his home in Estate Upper Love and headed to the park. According to an affidavit, Officer Lawrence James stated that he arrived on scene and found Mr. Bannis lying on the ground face up with what appeared to be blood pooled in the collar of his shirt. EMTs transported Mr. Bannis to the Juan F. Luis Hospital where he was listed as unconscious but in stable condition.

Mr. Bannis was struck in the head and repeatedly kicked about the body, causing blunt head injury and his subsequent death on October 19, 2015. He remained in a comatose state and two months later, on Oct. 19, he succumbed to his wounds at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

In commenting on the outcome of the trial, Attorney General Denis George said, "'I am pleased with the results. Justice has been served and I commend our prosecution team, Assistant Attorneys General Eric Chancellor and Amie Simpson for their excellent work and dedication under particularly challenging circumstances. After the untimely withdrawal of federal prosecutors previously handling the case, our prosecution team took on the case on short notice with the relentless determination to bring the perpetrators to justice. Much gratitude also to the witnesses who came forward. I hope this provides some degree of comfort and closure to Mr. Bannis's loved ones."

Assistant Attorney General Chancellor said, "The most vulnerable people in our society are children and the elderly. Augustus Bannis was a 73-year-old man who lived an honorable life and deserved respect. But the defendants believed that his car was more valuable than his life."

Mr. Bannis was a former pastor of the First Baptist Church in Salisbury, Dominica for 18 years before relocating to St. Croix for 10 years. He served as a deacon at the Calvary Baptist Church on St. Croix where he taught Sunday school, bible school, mentored the young and assisted the elderly. His daughter, Jacqueline Zamore, said the father of six adopted and raised many other children along the years. She described him as a very affectionate, kindhearted husband and family man who never held a grudge, as he was known as the peace maker. She said the family was saddened when the crime occurred, but they will now focus on the good times.

"When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure; treasure the memories, said Ms. Zamore.

Sentencing for Mr. Cole and Mr. George is scheduled in February 2020 in the Superior Court of the Virgin Islands.