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'I Already Print Out the Shirt Them': Bryan Refutes Rumors About Infighting With Roach; Says He's Ready to Face Gubernatorial Competition

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Then-candidate Albert Bryan embraces then-Lt. candidate Tregenza Roach following the announcement of Mr. Roach as Mr. Bryan's running mate in 2018. Mrs. Bryan looks at the two men with pride.. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

Governor Albert Bryan quickly refuted rumors making the rounds about him selecting a new running mate for the 2022 gubernatorial election.

During an hourlong live-streamed interview with the Consortium Tuesday night, Mr. Bryan laughed off the claim and said Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach “is just a blessing to have on board,” and that if people were “looking for chinks in my armor, look somewhere else; me and the

lieutenant governor get along real well.”

He added “I already print up the shirt them,” speaking of campaign t-shirts.

Mr. Bryan was asked about the gubernatorial competition by Ernice Gilbert, founder and publisher of V.I. Consortium. “You're hearing all kinds of names, are you concerned at all come next year with your competition?”

In response the governor said, “No. I look forward to the competition. I’m like one of them big horses that love the track.”

The territory's leader later boasted about his accomplishments. “In the last three years I could quantify our governorship and our administration, Tregenza and I, as record-setting. No one ever has done what we have done. No one has ever paid out as many tax checks, no one has ever collected as much revenues as we have; no one has had the economy — [there never has been flights landing in St. Thomas like this](#). No one has ever had the marine industry where it is.”

Mr. Gilbert countered by stating it could be easily argued that much of the heightened tourism numbers are related to Covid. The governor said, “It’s not Covid related. Go talk to St. Kitts, Antigua, St. Maarten, Trinidad, and ask them if they are having the same experience.”

Mr. Bryan added, “No one has every put together a [20-year economic development plan](#) for the government ever... People want me to be humble about what we accomplished and they want to kick me around every day, but the reality is who else is doing anything.”

The governor went on: “Despite Covid, [Main Street is finished after 8 years](#), Veterans Drive is finished... \$7 million dollars [at the \[Henry E. Rohlsen\] Airport](#); Gallows Bay is now moving to Container Port; we’ve expanded the cargo center in Charlotte Amalie; [\\$23 million rental center at the airport in St. Thomas](#) — the list goes on and on.

“The things that we are doing and accomplishing we never before in the history of the Virgin Islands been able to do,” he said. “Despite Covid [we've made] steady progress, the government of the Virgin Islands' budget is stabler now then it has been in 30 years.”

Mr. Gilbert told the governor that he uses Covid at his convenience: to portray success and then to cast blame for failure. In his response the governor said, “Despite having a year-long lockdown we were able to get a lot of things done, but some things were delayed inevitably.”

Displaying a high level of confidence in his ability to defeat competition next year, the governor was asked by Mr. Gilbert whether there would be a solution to the Gov't Employees' Retirement System by the end of his first term. Mr. Bryan said, “in 2022 or 2026?”