



U.S. Department of Justice

RONALD W. SHARPE
United States Attorney
District of the Virgin Islands

Ron de Lugo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse
5500 Veterans Drive, Suite 260
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, VI 00802-6424

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIPD Officers and VIPA Officer Indicted, Charged with
Operating and Participating in a Criminal Enterprise
that Engaged in Extortion, Kidnaping and Illegal Narcotics Distribution

St. Thomas, USVI - United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent-in-Charge Luis Fraticelli, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent-in-Charge Javier F. Pena, Acting United States Marshal Reginald Bradshaw, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division (IRS CID) Special Agent-in-Charge Daniel W. Auer, U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) Inspector-in-Charge David Collins and Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Novelle Francis announced today that a federal grand jury returned a 33-count indictment charging that Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) Officers Enid Edwards and Francis Brooks, and Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) Officer Bill John-Baptiste, in their capacity as Virgin Islands law enforcement officers, engaged in illegal activities, including extortion, bribery, kidnaping, assault and battery, and illegal narcotics distribution on the island of St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. The indictment charges that Edwards and Brooks abused their positions of trust as police officers of the VIPD by engaging in illegal activities for the purpose of enriching themselves.

The indictment follows a long-term investigation conducted by a federal Public

Corruption Task Force. If convicted of the federal charges, Edwards, Brooks and John-Baptiste each face a maximum of 20 years imprisonment and \$250,000 in fines. The defendants are also charged with violations of local Virgin Islands laws, which carry potential incarceration punishment of a year to life.

The indictment alleges that from 2000 until 2005, Edwards and Brooks in their capacity as VIPD officers, made numerous contacts with drug traffickers and required that the drug traffickers pay varying sums of cash money for various purposes, in exchange for which the drug traffickers would not be arrested or otherwise reported to law enforcement authorities. The indictment also alleges that Edwards and Brooks acquired and sold illegal narcotics to a local drug trafficker.

The indictment also alleges that in 2007, Edwards and Brooks, in their capacity as VIPD officers, forced a person, against the person's will, to accompany them as they drove around the island of St. Thomas in a police vehicle. The officers forced the person to pay them for the return of the person's vehicle, which Edwards and Brooks had caused to be towed.

The indictment further alleges that in 2008, John-Baptiste, in his capacity as a VIPA officer, physically assaulted and detained a person against the person's will as Edwards and Brooks received cash in exchange for the person's release from police custody. The indictment also charges John-Baptiste with aggravated assault and battery and unlawful sexual contact in relation to the incident.

The indictment also alleges that from 2008 until the date of the indictment, Edwards and Brooks made numerous contacts with an unlawful alien in the United States and required the alien to pay varying sums of cash in exchange for which the alien would not be reported to

United States immigration authorities. The indictment alleges that the alien gave Edwards and Brooks an old driver's licence and cash in exchange for a new Virgin Islands driver's licence.

The federal Public Corruption Task Force comprises the FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals Service, IRS CID, USPIS and Virgin Islands Police Department. U.S. Attorney Sharpe asks that anyone -- citizen or member of the VIPD -- who has information related to any form of public corruption to call the task force at (340) 715-6516.

An indictment is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless found guilty.

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