



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIPD Officers Sentenced to 151 Months in Prison
for Racketeering, Extortion, Bribery and Related Charges

St. Thomas, USVI - United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe announced today that District Court Chief Judge Curtis V. Gomez sentenced Virgin Islands Police Department Officers Enid Edwards and Francis Brooks, each to 151 months in prison. On January 14, 2011, both Edwards and Brooks were convicted of running a criminal enterprise under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), as well as federal and territorial crimes related to extortion, bribery and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.

The court also ordered Brooks and Edwards to forfeit \$11,700 to the United States, and Edwards to forfeit an additional \$37,400 for illegal financial structuring. Brooks also was ordered to serve five years of supervised release following his prison term, and Edwards three.

“Public corruption is an insidious problem that pulls at the fabric of a civil society based upon a system of laws,” said U.S. Attorney Sharpe. “These individuals chose to abuse their positions as police officers for selfish gain. Their appalling criminal behavior has a negative impact on the reputations of many good officers on the Virgin Islands Police Department who serve honorably every day. The United States Attorney’s Office will continue to root out and aggressively prosecute instances of public corruption wherever it may be.”

Brooks and Edwards were sentenced to 151 months on the following federal racketeering offenses: racketeering, racketeering extortion and racketeering extortion conspiracy. Brooks and Edwards were sentenced to 60 months for federal drug trafficking and drug trafficking conspiracy. The defendants were sentenced to five years for the following territorial offenses: extortion, solicitation and receipt of a bribe, conflict of interest and aggravated assault and battery. Edwards was sentenced to 60 months for financial structuring. The Court ordered the territorial sentences to run concurrently with the federal sentences.

Edwards and Brooks were convicted of operating a RICO enterprise whose members and associates conspired to conduct or participate in the enterprise's affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity which included extortion, bribery, kidnaping, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and extortion related crimes under the Virgin Islands Code. Edwards also was convicted of structuring under federal law.

Evidence presented at trial established that from 2000 through 2009, the activities of Edwards and Brooks, in their capacity as VIPD officers, included extorting drug traffickers for money in exchange for which they would avoid arrest, as well as selling and acquiring illegal narcotics to and from local drug traffickers; engaged in kidnaping in relation to extortion of private citizens; and providing counterfeit documents in exchange for money.

The case was investigated by the Public Corruption Task Force, comprising the Virgin Islands Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Marshals Service, and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kim R. Lindquist, Nolan D. Paige and Kelly B. Lake.