



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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January 15, 2015

Lee Carle
WSTA Radio – Lucky 13
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Mr. Carle:

We, the employees of the Department of Justice are in a state of shock after becoming aware that our new Attorney General Soraya Dias Coffelt has resigned after one week. This department after 8 years of failed leadership looked forward to embracing new leadership, and we are truly disappointed that Judge Dias Coffelt thought it best to leave us. There are many serious issues to be addressed in this department and we had faith in her abilities, but we understand that she has moral standards that she must adhere to.

We understand that she wanted to make certain changes but it appears that some people wanted business to run the same as usual. We made recommendations to her and we believe that she was going to make some necessary changes and she was not given the authority to do what she thought was best for our department. Politics is hard but we respect that she will not be bullied by others into choosing her managers and some of her staff at the DOJ. Attorney Dias brought in Kevin Rodriguez, who is well qualified; however, he is gone because of politics. Solicitor General, Bernard VanSluytman was given a pink slip and immediately after, we lost an attorney who decided she couldn't stay after that poor decision. Our Chief Deputy Attorney General, Wayne Anderson was also given a pink slip and this was another bad decision. Turmoil at the Department of Justice! Who is listening to this Department?

We are attaching a letter sent to the Mapp/Potter Transition Team that clearly spelled out all of our concerns. We believe that she agreed with our concerns and was about to make tough decisions but she was not allowed to do so. It's a shame.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice



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December 23, 2014

The Mapp/Potter Transition Team
Lockhart Gardens
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Sir/Madam:

The staff at the Department of Justice writes to you to voice some serious concerns about the transition team and how uncomfortable we feel about the persons drafted to complete the interviews with the personnel. We believe that it is very difficult for us to be as forthcoming and honest about the operations of this department when people who serve as immediate supervisors or friends with said supervisors are put in charge of conducting interviews with staff.

We understand that this customary process within a department is to have persons who work for that department, prepare a comprehensive report to give the transition team an idea of how a department operates but we believe that a supervisor *should not* be allowed to interview staff that he/she supervises or has close interactions with. Specifically, we speak about the Chief of the Criminal Division, Attorney Renee Gumbs Carty. We believe that there is a serious conflict of interest to have her assigned to conduct interviews of employees here. We know that if she remains in her current position after these interviews, our honest opinions will be used against us.

While she has not interviewed us to date or even scheduled any such interviews, we have been told that she has been assigned. Our concerns come after having been supervised by Attorney Gumbs Carty for the past several years where we have found her to be unreasonable, unfair, unjust, vindictive, and biased. In our opinion, she believes that the criminal division revolves around her instead of the work we have been tasked to do. She is not a team player and does not appreciate the hard work of the staff of this department. She is quick to find fault with this staff that goes above and beyond and not acknowledge the fact that staff members are each doing the work of multiple persons. Staff members are reluctant to have differing opinions because we are aware that we are now on her "hit list." We have seen the decline in staff morale because of actions from the Attorney General and from Attorney Gumbs Carty. She has been the cause of this department losing a few excellent attorneys because of her unwillingness to assist when needed in Court.

Attorney Gumbs Carty sits in her office and refuses to go to court, even to fill in for an attorney who has a conflict of being scheduled to be in front of two judges at the same time. She just passes on files and will not lend support to the already overworked attorneys and the heavy caseloads carried by the Assistant Attorneys General. Several attorneys just got tired and chose to leave our office because Attorney Gumbs Carty is unfair in her dealings with them, especially when they voiced displeasure with her support of the persons she supervises or her lack of being a part of the Criminal Team.

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Many of us have witnessed firsthand how Attorney Renee Gumbs Carty conspired with Iris Kern to get rid of AAG Sabrina Cohen, who was the sole domestic violence attorney. That young lady was railroaded time and time again because she stood up for herself to two people who consistently bullied her. Dr. Kern, who is the supposed Consultant on Domestic Violence believed that she knew more about the law than an attorney and when Attorney Cohen refused to have her act as her supervisor, she and Gumbs Carty plotted against Cohen. What made matters worse was the fact that because of Cohen, Attorney Gumbs Carty was found to be working in her shop in Red Hook instead of on her Chief of Criminal job. While Attorney Cohen sat in a judge's chambers awaiting approval of a plea offer that could only been approved by Attorney Gumbs Carty, instead of being in her office, she was in her store and this put Attorney Cohen on her "hit list." Attorney Gumbs-Carty and Dr. Kern harassed Cohen to the point where the entire staff saw this vendetta and knew it was just a matter of time before Cohen would be let go. Eventually Attorney Cohen was discharged under the guise of the grant ending and this we believe to be an untruth by Attorney Gumbs Carty and Attorney General Frazer, who allowed Gumbs Carty to run over the staff because he just did not care.

Attorney Gumbs Carty also has issues with others that she does not supervise. In working with other personnel to arrange for witnesses or to manage time issues, she has been found to be someone who tells untruths on a consistent and regularly basis. She is not believable and this is a major problem this department has had with the Virgin Islands Police Department, particularly, Major Crimes. She and detectives from the police department have had problems with establishing cases because she fails to review cases in a timely manner and seems to always have an issue signing off on subpoenas for the officers. This has become a major "bone of contention" with these two departments who should be working cooperatively to achieve success.

Over the past couple of years, we have watched a concerted effort to dismantle all specialized units in this department. We believe this is WRONG! Specialized units such as White Collar, Domestic Violence, and Family/Special Victims are important to the successful prosecution of cases at the Department of Justice. These units were successful when they were fully staffed and now, cases that require special care and even training are just assigned haphazardly. An attorney who has made it clear that practicing in Family Court's juvenile section is not something he wants to do is forced to handle these cases, while an attorney who has always handled these cases, has the experience and would like to continue with these cases was removed from the Family/Special Victims Unit. Attorney Gumbs Carty must have her way and does not listen to differing opinions or objections to her decisions. She does not act in the best interest of the Criminal Division. THESE UNITS MUST BE RE-ESTABLISHED!!!

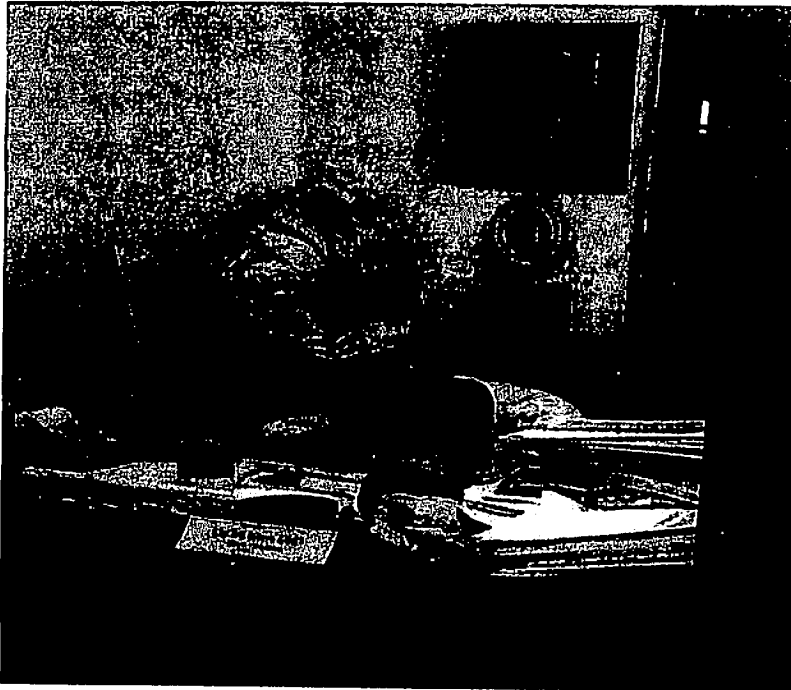
Attorney Douglas Dick worked tirelessly to establish the Family/Special Victims Unit many years ago by applying for grants and this unit functioned very well with three attorneys, who covered for each other in Family Court when another had a conflict. These three attorneys were the only ones who handled child victim cases because they received specialized training for prosecuting cases where children were the victims. Now these special cases are spread around to all criminal attorneys and this is so wrong. Again, kindly put these units back as they were.

The Special Investigations Division is another unit that needs serious attention. This unit had a fully functioning unit that investigated cases, made arrests and was a pride of this department. This unit is really a joke under former Commissioner of Police, James McCall, who just walks around here in jeans and sneakers every day of the week. Since the departure of Billy Curtis, this division does nothing to make this department proud like before and has become a laughing stock. REBUILD THIS UNIT PLEASE!!!

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While we have cited some of our concerns, it is important to note that another concern we have is that she will **NOT** conduct any interviews of the staff and will write her own views, ideas and opinions, or maybe that of herself and Dr. Iris Kern, whose opinions seem to matter to Attorney Gumbs Carty. We have seen Attorney Gumbs Carty and Iris Kern locked in their offices and we fear that the report may just be their opinions. While we mention Iris Kern, we would like to add a few things about her time here.

Dr. Kern's time at the DOJ has been useless, unproductive and an utter waste of money. While given the position of consultant on domestic violence matters, no one seeks her advice and she has not written any policies that have been adopted. **NONE!** She sits in her office and does nothing much. Well, she plays lots of games on the computer and she also sleeps practically every day. Below are two of many photos captured by the staff of Iris Kern on the job.



We would like to go back to discuss the lack of respect for attorneys in this office by this AG and his Criminal Chief. The Assistant Attorneys General that are employed at the Department of Justice were interviewed and found to be well-qualified before being hired; however, they are not allowed to use their good judgment and experience when offering plea agreements. It is an embarrassment for these AAGs (particularly in court) to have to receive approval from Attorney Gumbs Carty for a plea offer. These attorneys are experienced and qualified, some even more than Attorney Gumbs Carty but must still seek her approval when offering plea deals. These AAGs should be given the authority to make some decisions on their own.

The attorneys have found that Attorney Gumbs Carty is sometimes too harsh in deciding pleas and to the detriment of this office. For example, someone was arrested for burglary and an AAG wants to offer a plea for two years that the defendant is willing to accept but she insists on a plea for five years. The defendant decides to go to trial and the Department of Justice wins a conviction on all the counts and at sentencing, the judge sentences the defendant to sixteen months. This is a waste of the Department's time and resources when we could have secured a conviction with more jail time had the plea offer been more reasonable.

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We, the staff at the Department of Justice wanted the transition team to be aware of our concerns because we do not believe that they will be addressed in the report. While we are not advocating for anyone to lose their jobs because we would like to keep ours, Attorney Gumbs Carty should not be kept in the position of Criminal Chief. Dr. Iris Kern has been saying throughout this office that she will get whatever position she wants so we implore you to release her from the DOJ as she is not contributing here. We hope and pray that our concerns are taken seriously and you see that we only write this letter because of our fear of retribution. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

The Staff of the Virgin Islands Department of Justice