

**COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
MR. PAUL A. ROLLE ESQ. QPM, MS, BS
APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE SPEECH, MARCH 30, 2020**

Your Excellency, Most Honourable Cornelius Smith, Most Honourable Prime Minister Hubert Minnis, Minister Marvin Dames, my wife Terry, ladies and gentlemen: Good afternoon.

Today, as I assume the Office of Commissioner of Police, I wish to acknowledge Almighty God who is the head of my life and without whom, I would not be standing before you today. Secondly, I wish to say a huge thanks to my parents, who have instilled Godly principles in me. Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that this “barefoot boy” from Andros could ever become Commissioner of Police. I know Daddy must be looking down from heaven with all smiles right now. Thank you mammy and daddy for believing in me!

To all of my family, friends and loved ones, my Andros diaspora, due to the onslaught of the Corona Virus COVID-19, we had to scale down this event today. As much as I would loved for you to have been here with me, life must go on. I again ask all to take these advisories seriously and let’s keep safe.

Your Excellency, thank you for accepting my nomination and for swearing me in as the eighth Commissioner of the Royal Bahamas Police Force in an Independent Bahamas. Most Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Minister thank you for reposing this confidence in me. This is an awesome task and I will continue to do my best to serve this Country with distinction.

To my wife Terry, you supported me over the last 32 years. In our early years you and I often had to change shift with our children in the parking lot of the Princess Margaret Hospital where you worked, or the parking lot here at Police Headquarters where I worked. When I wanted to resign from policing, after having two promotions over a 15-year period while some skipped and hopped three and four times in 5 years. You encouraged me to stay focused on why I became a police officer in the first place—to serve. I say thank you for being there and listening to my concerns. I love you honey. You, like the wives of many police officers deserve special honour.

There were many who have contributed in some way in molding me to what I am today. They are too many to mention, but please permit me to acknowledge former Commissioners of Police, Paul Farquharson, Reginald Ferguson and Ellison Greenslade who all played a pivotal role in this ascent today. Commissioner Anthony Ferguson, you are my contemporary and confidant. We climbed the ranks together and I eventually served as your unexpected protégé. You have given me good guidance and advice over the last year. As you say farewell to this noble Organization today, I say a huge thank you publicly. May God bless you and keep you as you move on in your new endeavors.

Your Excellency, we remain concerned of the proliferation of illegal firearms and high level of gun crimes in our communities. We have also taken note of the stubborn illicit drug trade, which has persisted in many different forms over the years. It is fueling much of the gun violence through criminal gangs and criminal enterprises, which have taken the lives of too many of our young men. The Police Force will continue to secure and foster productive partnerships nationally, regionally and internationally. Such partnerships are fundamental to our success, but all citizens and residents must take responsibility for this carnage and work together to stop it.

Financial crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, and identity theft to name a few, have been a pivotal issue in the global arena and indeed The Bahamas for several decades now. While authorities are constantly

looking for new ways to track down and prevent financial crimes, criminals are always developing innovative tactics in order to stay ahead. This continues to be of grave concern to law enforcement.

We are equally concerned about the laundering of the proceeds from crimes. Money laundering is a process vital to making crime worthwhile. It is inextricably linked to the underlying criminal activity that generated it, by disguising profits that were obtained from crime.

The Royal Bahamas Police Force, in partnership with all citizens, residents and visitors, exists to provide quality law enforcement service, with emphasis on the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of peace, the prevention and detection of crime, and the enforcement of all laws. We will do our utmost to retain public's trust and shall perform our duties in a manner which respects individual human rights, and which reflects fairness, sensitivity and compassion. Yet, we shall act in firm pursuit of all offenders of our laws, so as to ensure a safe and just society, where neither crime nor the fear of crime adversely affects the quality of life.

While we have a duty to ensure that human rights are protected, the police must at times act to restrain the freedom of those who disregard our laws and seek to violate the rights of the innocent. This in itself is a source of conflict yet it is necessary to ensure the peace of every person. We shall discharge our duties with courage, integrity and loyalty, being ever mindful of a changing environment, with a willingness to embrace justified criticism and the need for change.

We solicit the public's continued support, partnership and cooperation as we seek to fulfill our mandate to keep all safe. The police cannot do this alone. We must all accept responsibility to cooperate with law enforcement. In the words of Sir Robert Peel, "the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time and attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence."

To you officers, police reserves, and civilian support staff whom I am privileged to lead, I publicly commend you for the sacrifices you continue to make each and every day. Continue to work, but not for reward.

I am immensely conscious of public concern over the manner in which a small number of officers abuse their authority or perform their duties in an unprofessional way. I, along with my Senior Executive Leadership Team, will continue to monitor complaints and will take fair, firm and decisive action where there are grounds to take disciplinary action against any officer or member of the Force. None of us are above the law and we must all be accountable for our actions.

I entreat each of you to strive to maintain the public's trust and confidence. I encourage you all to remain steadfast in your duties and when your tasks become dangerous, hold on to your faith. Be honest and fair in your dealings with your colleagues, members of the public and suspects. Your roles are often times thankless, but I ask you to remain true to your calling. In the words of King Solomon in his Proverb 3.3, "Never let loyalty and kindness leave you. Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart!" The Bahamian people have high expectations of us and indeed, they deserve this.

Your Excellency, Most Honourable Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen: I assure you that I will discharge my constitutional duties without fear, favour or influence by any consideration of the people involved; and without pressure from or partiality to any person or other external influence.

Almighty God, I beseech you to guide me and lead me with your powerful hand. Let your fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through; be my strength and shield; keep me humble before your people. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for you.

Your Excellency, Ladies and gentlemen, God bless you! God bless the Royal Bahamas Police Force and God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.