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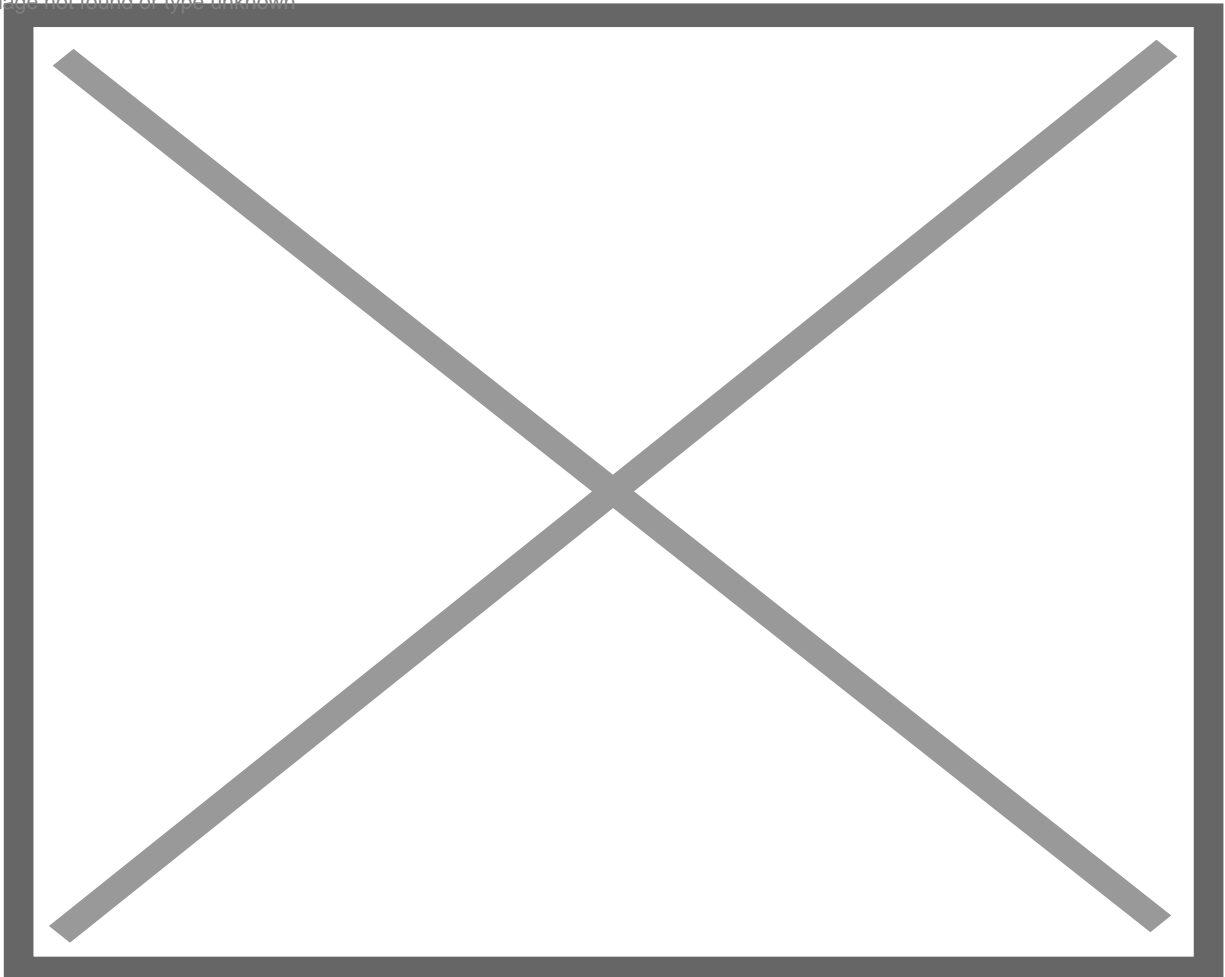
Frederiksted Homicide Suspect Indicted on Federal Charges; Could Face Life Imprisonment or Death Penalty

Rosniel Diaz-Bautista charged with crimes that could lead to the death penalty; the case involves federal firearm statutes and local first-degree murder laws

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Mugshot of Rosniel Diaz-Bautista. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced on Tuesday that 22-year-old [Rosniel Diaz-Bautista](#) of St. Croix has been charged in connection with the fatal shooting of Indierra Morales. Diaz-Bautista is set to appear before Magistrate Judge G. Alan Teague for an Advice of Rights hearing on December 3, 2024.

According to court filings, Diaz-Bautista is facing federal charges for use of a firearm during a crime of violence resulting in death and discharge of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. He has also been charged locally with first-degree murder.

If convicted on these charges, Diaz-Bautista could face the maximum penalty of death, life imprisonment, or any term of years determined by a federal district judge, who will consider the U.S. sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors before issuing a sentence.

The charges stem from an investigation conducted by Homeland Security Investigations and the Virgin Islands Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel H. Huston.

This case is part of the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) program, a national initiative aimed at reducing violent crime in communities. PSN brings together federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and community leaders to identify key issues and implement comprehensive strategies to address them. Additional details about the initiative can be found on the Department of Justice's website at [justice.gov/psn](https://www.justice.gov/psn).

U.S. Attorney Smith emphasized that the charges against Diaz-Bautista are allegations, and he is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.