

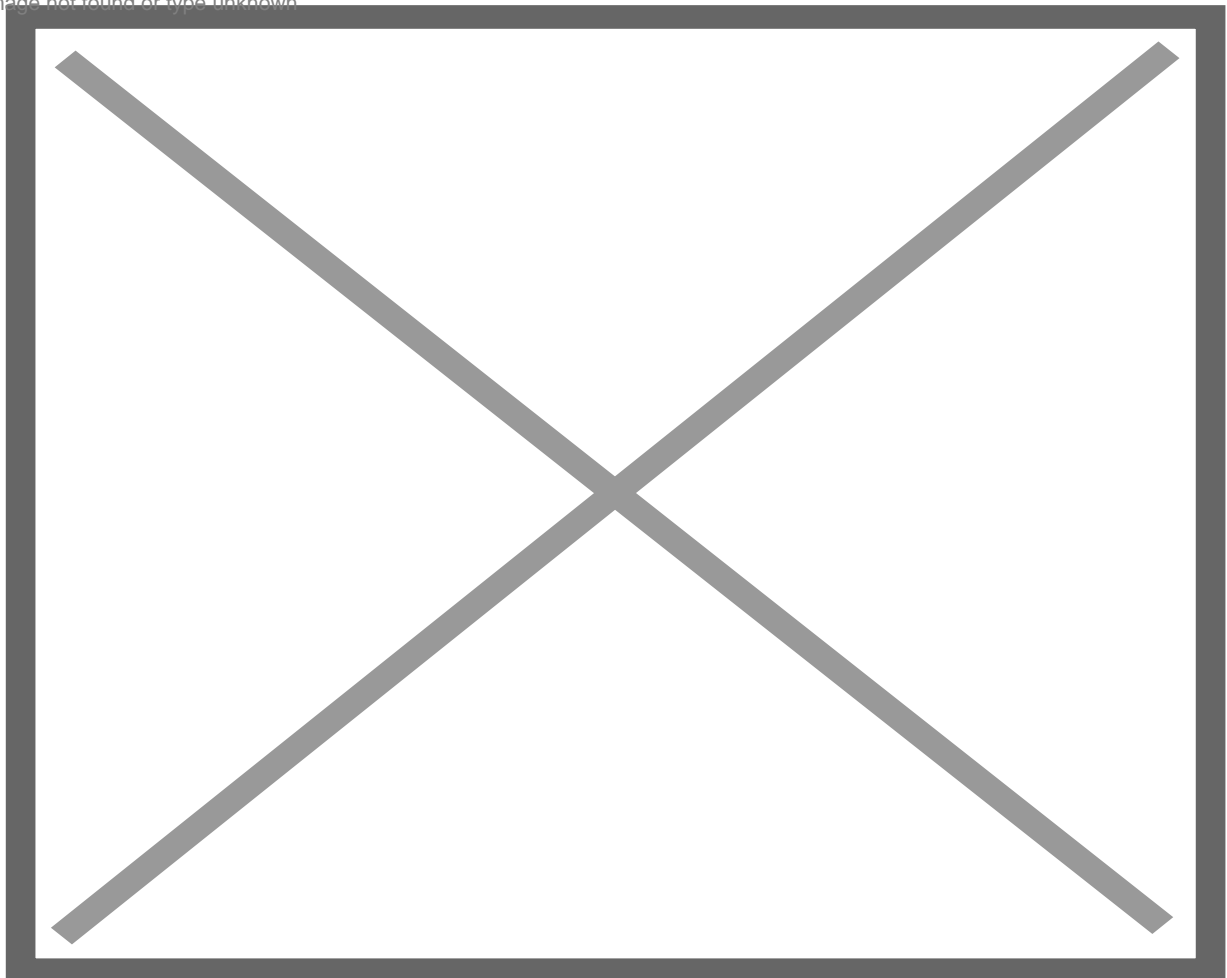
St. Croix Jury Acquits Three Men in 2021 Double Homicide Case After Witness Contradicts Government's Claims

A key government witness admitted in court that she was not an eyewitness, contradicting prosecution claims. The jury swiftly returned not guilty verdicts, raising questions about prosecutorial conduct and the handling of exculpatory evidence.

Community Center / **Published On February 13, 2025 05:37 PM /**

Staff Consortium **February 13, 2025**

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Scene of La Reine shooting and homicide on Monday, April 19, 2021. The V.I.P.D. is investigating multiple incidents that left three men dead. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

Three men charged in connection with the [April 19, 2021, double homicide](#) in the Aureo Diaz Heights housing community have been acquitted after a jury returned not guilty verdicts on

Wednesday, February 13. The swift decision came less than an hour into deliberations, marking a dramatic conclusion to a case that initially led to a massive law enforcement operation and federal indictment.

The case stemmed from a multi-agency law enforcement operation on May 3, 2021, that led to the arrests of Gilberto Rivera Jr., Jameel Williams, and Luis Rivera. The operation, called "The People Have Spoken," included over 100 law enforcement officers from the V.I. Police Department, the FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The arrests were made in connection with a shooting that [left two people dead and four others injured](#), including an 11-year-old girl. Law enforcement also pursued Justin Nesbitt and Gilmore Rivera, who left the territory before their arrests.



Law enforcement officers, including St. Croix Police Chief Sidney Elskoe, pictured above, announced the arrest of three suspects allegedly involved in the April 19 double homicide on St. Croix. (Credit: VIPD)

During the trial, defense attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the case after evidence emerged that the prosecution withheld exculpatory information from the defendants. The judge denied the motion but allowed the defense to present parts of the previously undisclosed evidence and instructed the jury that they could assume the withheld information was favorable to the defendants.

A central witness in the government's case admitted in court that she was not an eyewitness, contradicting initial claims made by prosecutors. The government's reliance on false statements and rumors—without corroborating evidence—further weakened their case.

The defense strongly argued that the government's failure to disclose key evidence violated the defendants' due process rights under the Brady rule, which requires prosecutors to turn over all exculpatory material. While the court did not dismiss the case outright, the ruling allowing the jury to consider the withheld evidence likely contributed to the rapid acquittal.

With the jury's not guilty verdicts, all three defendants have been cleared of the charges.

As of now, there is no indication from prosecutors on whether they will seek additional legal action related to the case. The acquittal raises questions about prosecutorial conduct and the

effectiveness of the investigation that led to the high-profile arrests nearly four years ago.

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