

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Homicide Count Reaches 32 After 57-Year-Old Man Is Found Shot Dead on St. Thomas

Police say a gun detection alert sent officers to Hospital Ground Monday night, but no victim was found. The next morning, 57-year-old Pernell Slaven Jr. was discovered beneath a vehicle with multiple gunshot wounds, marking the USVI's 32nd homicide.

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ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Police Department is investigating the fatal shooting of 57-year-old Pernell Slaven Jr., whose body was discovered beneath a vehicle in Hospital Ground Tuesday morning, hours after the department's gun detection system alerted authorities to multiple gunshots in the same area.

Slaven's death represents the 14th homicide on St. Thomas in 2026. Combined with 18 homicides recorded on St. Croix, the territory has now recorded 32 homicides this year.

According to VIPD Director of Communications Glen Dratte, the department's Gun Detection System alerted the 911 Emergency Call Center to multiple gunshots in the Hospital Ground area at approximately 9:23 p.m. Monday, Aug. 10.

Officers responded and searched the surrounding area but did not locate a victim or evidence associated with the reported gunfire at that time.

Approximately 12 hours later, at 9:20 a.m. Tuesday, a concerned citizen contacted 911 and reported seeing an unresponsive male lying beneath a vehicle in the area.

Responding officers located the man and observed what appeared to be multiple gunshot wounds to his body.

Emergency Medical Technicians arrived and assessed the victim, determining that he showed no signs of life.

The deceased was subsequently identified by next of kin as Slaven.

The circumstances surrounding the shooting remain under investigation. Detectives are actively working to determine what led to the incident.

Slaven's death raises St. Thomas's homicide count to 14 for the year. St. Croix has recorded 18, bringing the U.S. Virgin Islands total to 32 homicides so far in 2026.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to contact the VIPD Investigation Bureau at 340-774-2211, extensions 5555 or 5556, or 340-714-9830. Information may also be provided by calling 911, Crime Stoppers V.I. at 800-222-8477, or the Chief's Office at 340-715-5548.