

logo not found or type unknown

Homicide Suspect Arrested on St. Croix After St. Thomas Killing as He Prepared to Fly Mainland

VIPD says J'vonte Mercer was arrested on St. Croix about 62 hours after 21-year-old Gerell Reed was found shot to death on Judy M. Gomez Highway. Detectives learned Mercer was preparing to fly to the U.S. mainland and traveled to St. Croix to arrest him.

Crime / **Published On August 30, 2026 11:35 AM /**

Staff Consortium **August 30, 2026**

Image not found or type unknown



Mugshot of J'vonte W. Mercer. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT.

ST. THOMAS — V.I. Police Department detectives arrested a suspect in the [killing of 21-year-old Gerell L. Reed](#) roughly 62 hours after the fatal shooting, tracking the 23-year-old from St. Thomas to St. Croix after receiving information Saturday that he was preparing to take a flight to the U.S. mainland.

According to VIPD Director of Communications Glen Dratte, J'vonte W. Mercer was arrested at approximately 5 p.m. Saturday, August 29, according to VIPD. The homicide occurred at approximately 2:49 a.m. Thursday, August 27, putting just 62 hours and 11 minutes between the reported shooting and Mercer's arrest. His bail was set at \$1 million.

The investigation began when the ShotSpotter detection system alerted 911 to multiple gunshots fired along Judy M. Gomez Highway on St. Thomas. Shortly afterward, a concerned resident contacted Central Dispatch and reported that a vehicle had struck a wall and that an unresponsive man was inside.

Officers responding to the scene found the man unresponsive with what appeared to be multiple gunshot wounds across his body. Emergency medical personnel checked for vital signs and determined that he was dead. His next of kin subsequently identified him as Mr. Reed.

The Major Crime Unit of VIPD's Criminal Investigation Bureau subsequently identified Mercer, a St. Thomas resident, as the suspect in the homicide.

The investigation then moved across islands. On Saturday, detectives received information that Mercer was on St. Croix and preparing to take a flight to the U.S. mainland. VIPD detectives traveled to St. Croix, located Mercer and placed him under arrest.

He was then transported back to St. Thomas, where police processed and booked him before turning him over to the Bureau of Corrections pending his advice-of-rights hearing.

Anyone with information concerning the homicide is asked to contact the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 340-774-2211, extensions 5555 or 5556, or 340-714-9830. Information may also be provided through 911, Crime Stoppers V.I. at 800-222-8477, the chief's office at 340-715-5548 or the commissioner's office at 340-715-5506.