

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Man Shot Five Times Dies, Another Shot Once, Lives

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Two separate shootings in St. Thomas Sunday left one man dead and another wounded, VIPD Public Information Officer Kevin Jackson has announced.

According to Jackson, police reported a shooting that took place at about 9 a.m. Sunday in the Anna's Retreat area. The victim was shot approximately five times and later died of his injuries at the Roy Lester Schneider Medical Center.

The man had no identification and no next of kin to identify or claim the body, Jackson said.

VI Consortium received a tip about the homicide from a police source, indicating that the killing was yet another gang-related incident.

Elsewhere in St. Thomas, Arnold Joseph, 21, of Bovoni was shot once in his left thigh in the area of Brookman Road, as he walked toward his residence on Sunday morning. Joseph was treated and released from the hospital.

This brings the homicide count to eight in St. Thomas.

On Feb. 26, Police Commissioner-designee Delroy Richards said violent crime on St. Thomas was being perpetrated by a small group of individuals. Richards also said the VIPD was working to stop the rash of violent crime.

"I'm also very cognizant of the most recent upsurge of violence in the territory, and I would first like to assure you that the police department is working vigorously to ensure that this community is not held hostage by a small group of violent perpetrators," he [said](#).

But the VIPD is having problems recruiting new officers because, according to Governor Mapp, prospects have been unable to pass an entrance exam written on a seventh grade level.

"As Commissioner Richards indicated, we've actually begun that process and believe we have some issues with testing," Mapp said. "In fact, most of us in Government House want to sit the test because we don't understand how this test that's at a seventh-grade written level — the quad section uses no more than two digits in the arithmetic section — and we had twenty-eight people sit this test a few weeks ago, and three people passed.

He continued: "Part of the assessment is to determine why are we having these kinds of numbers, what's the issue, and are we targeting the right pool of folks for law enforcement in the community."

The governor also made known that the VIPD has seen difficulty in hiring the right people for the job — those with a level of education that could perform the basic duties of a police officer. Because of these issues, Mapp said, hiring police officers who are not from the territory might be the solution.

"The experience has been to get the bodies," Mapp continued. "Getting the bodies who do not remain in the department, getting the bodies that cannot perform, [and] when we say perform, [we mean] write reports, being able to testify clearly and concisely in court, and do the admin work of a police officer, and be able to relate with the public in communicating and speaking clearly, and decisively becomes a challenge, so we may not be focusing on the right type of candidates.

"Maybe we need to be really talking about looking for candidates with college credits and moving to a broad basis, rather than saying a GED or high school diploma is what we want. And then we're trying to dumb the test down," the governor said. "I only use that term of reducing the level and competency of the test, just to get someone to pass it, to say that we have a police officer."

Yet, with all the challenges facing the police department's recruiting efforts, the governor held a strong stance on "getting boots" on the ground, as it is critical, he says, in his

administration's efforts to secure the community.

"Those targets that we talked about in terms of numbers are real, we have to get those boots on the ground. If we are unable to fashion a strategy to get them on the ground from the community, we're going to have to import them. But we cannot have an absence of police in the territory, and expect our community and our residents to be safe," he said.

Correction: March 1st, 2015

An earlier version of this story misspelled Anna's Retreat. The error has since been corrected.

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