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ATF Offering \$15,000 Reward For Info on Hospital Ground Homicides

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St. Thomas — A federal law enforcement agency is offering a \$15,000 reward for the public's help in finding the gunmen behind three Hospital Ground murders in early April, marking a potential turning point in the investigation.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is seeking information that might advance the investigation of the shooting deaths of 42-year-old Michael McKie and Deshaune Harrigan, who were killed in separate incidents on April 8th. A third person, Junior Akimo Freeman, was shot to death in Hospital Ground two days later.

The ATF targets criminal enterprises and federal offenses involving the illegal use and trafficking of firearms. The agency is working closely with the Virgin Islands Police Department to tamp

down gun violence in some of the territory's worst hit communities, which includes Hospital Ground and neighborhoods throughout St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. The Virgin Islands " ... is a place where we can make an impact on violent crime," said Robert Cekada, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF's Miami Field Division, which includes the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Over a 72-hour period in Hospital Ground last month, three people were shot to death and two others were injured by gunfire. While authorities have seized caches of illegal firearms, no arrests have been made in the shootings. The unsolved murders occurred 'Round de Field,' or within a few blocks of the Lionel Robert Stadium, the Fish Market, the basketball courts and other spots where gang warfare and drug dealing routinely produce casualties.

The VIPD stepped up patrols in the neighborhood and sought tips from anyone having information about the shootings. Authorities hope the \$15,000 reward will be the incentive for anyone who knows something to contact the ATF, anonymously if they choose.

If you want to provide information that can help solve one of the Hospital Ground crimes, you can do so anonymously by calling or texting the ATF directly at 202-702-7219.