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Family of Three (Mother, daughter and Young Boy), Shot at While Looking For Apartment in Paradise, Police Say

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Police investigate shooting at Estate Paradise near the abandoned Evelyn M. Williams Elementary School By. VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — A mother, her 19-year-old daughter and a young boy — driving in Estate Paradise in the vicinity of the abandoned Evelyn Williams Elementary School on Friday afternoon and believed to be looking for an apartment to rent — were shot at by at least three assailants who investigators believe took a preemptive strike at a vehicle they thought had occupants looking to harm them.

That's according to two police sources with knowledge of the matter. The incident resulted in the two women sustaining gunshot wounds, V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima confirmed.

The suspects were in a silver Ford Focus, and investigators were observed on the scene retrieving items from the abandoned car. The women and the boy were in a white Chevrolet car.

The women were said to be looking for an apartment to rent, and the men, believing the Chevy car to be harboring enemies, drove after the car and opened fire, according to the police sources.

The mother jumped out of the vehicle screaming after she heard the gunshots, police said. The suspects then realized that the white Chevrolet was occupied by two women and a young boy, prompting the suspects to abandon their car and leave the area on foot. Additionally, police arrived on the scene quickly.

Detectives on Friday afternoon were spread about various neighboring communities in an attempt to apprehend the suspects. Mr. Derima told the Consortium that police were still on the hunt for the perpetrators as of Friday night.

The V.I.P.D. report says the 911 Emergency Call Center was notified of the incident at about 2:40 p.m. Officers arrived to the area and found the women injured by gunfire. Both victims were transported for medical assistance to the Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center via ambulance.

This incident is under investigation. The VIPD is asking for anyone with information about the shooting to call 911, the Crime TipLine at (340) 778-4950, or Crime Stoppers USVI at (800) 222-TIPS.