

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Two Men Shot To Death; Burned In House In Fredensburg

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ST. CROIX -- Two men were killed after being shot multiple times and thereafter burnt in a house in the old Fredensburg housing community here, located west of the Kingshill Cemetery on Monday night at about 9:37 p.m., VIPD Commissioner Delroy Richards confirmed to The Consortium this morning. Above, a cordoned-off area where VIPD officers and Fire Service personnel were conducting an investigation into homicides this morning.

The commissioner said he heard the transmission from the 911 emergency call center indicating to a police unit reports of shots being fired in the rundown housing community. Three units responded to the area, and upon arrival, a female who lives nearby, told

officers that she heard shots coming from the house and decided to call 911 after entering the home and realizing that the men were shot dead.

Furthermore, a report from VIPD Public Information Officer Kevin Jackson revealed that a second neighbor informed officers that after having heard the sounds of gunfire, he went to the home to check on the occupants, and as he got closer to the residence, he

forced to leave the home as the



Behind the downed, rotten tree

and wire fence, the burnt house where the two homicide victims were killed. Image Credit: The Consortium.

By the time officers arrived, the fire had already consumed the entire structure, Mr. Richards said. And when Fire Service personnel from the Estate Grove Place unit responded, the home was already destroyed.

Two male victims, men of Hispanic descent, were found in the debris, Mr. Richards said.

A motive for the slayings remains unknown, and Mr. Richards said because the men were so badly charred, an autopsy would have to be performed before their identities could be confirmed. He pointed out, however, that whomever committed the homicide had access to the house.

Mr. Richards said the VIPD is doing its best to contain the violence in the territory; but when witnesses won't come forward, it's hard to find perpetrators. He said a Violent Gang Task Force has been created, which includes both local and federal law enforcement officers, and meetings are held twice a week to share ideas, identify persons of interest, develop strategies and go after suspects.

Yet, even with all these efforts, Mr. Richards admits that police alone cannot stem the tide of criminal activity, seemingly on a rise in the territory.

There's a trend where the younger generation is becoming more involved in crime," Mr. Richards told The Consortium today. "And even though we get tips, the problem you have is you have to find witnesses or piece evidence together."

He added: "Yes, police might know who the suspects are, but you must build a case first, and if you go before the court and you don't have evidence that proves these suspects

guilty beyond reasonable doubt, then the case gets thrown out and it can't be retried," he concluded.

Image Credit: The Consortium.

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