

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Christiansted Frightened By Fireworks Thought To Be Gun Battle

VIC News / **Published On November 10, 2015 12:07 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **November 10, 2015**



ST. CROIX -- Around 7:50 p.m. on Monday, what sounded like rounds of gunfire reverberating through the Sion Farm and Peter's Rest communities sent residents running for cover, thinking that a vicious gunfight had broken out.

Police, receiving calls from concerned residents, made their way to the Thali Indian Grill, the apparent location where the loud bangs originated and where a vibrant party was ongoing. As it happens, the supposed gunshots were coming from fireworks that the organizers used as part of their celebration.



Spent fireworks at last night's Thali Indian Grill party.

But questions remained about the setting off of the fireworks, as the location, according to a retired Fire official, who was on the scene, was not safe for such activity. And while a permit was issued by the Fire Service's chief of training -- which is also a violation as only the Fire Service Marshal is authorized to issue such permits -- possessing fireworks is illegal unless given approval by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

The fireworks were also set off in close proximity of at least three buildings, and performed less than 50 feet away from partygoers. Further more, a gas station is located just a block away from Thali Indian Grill.

The retired Fire official said, "It was obvious to me that this was extremely unsafe."

He added: "Based on my knowledge of permitting, there are a series of steps that must be taken when handling explosives. These include shipping permit, inspection of the blast site, proper storage and transport, blasting of material, handlers permit, ATF permit, fire unit on standby, fire prevention officer on site and public notification."

No Fire Service unit nor a fire prevention officer was present for last night's event. And it remains unclear whether the public was notified.

After several minutes, the fireworks subsided after police ordered the organizers to stop, and the party continued. As of press time, the VIPD had not issued a press release concerning the matter.