

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Succumbs to Self-Inflicted Wound. He Was a Mental Illness Victim Crying Out for Help.

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Police at the scene where 30-year-old Kaheem Thomas succumbed to a self-inflicted gunshot wound. By. TOBY DERIMA FOR THE VIPD

ST. CROIX — A man was pronounced dead Tuesday afternoon at the Juan F. Luis Hospital following an altercation with a security guard at the Neighborhood Pharmacy in Estate Mountain which resulted in the man — who suffered with mental illness — disarming the security guard and turning the weapon on himself.

According to V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima, on Tuesday at approximately 4:24 p.m., the 911 Emergency Call Center received a report of a man

down at Estate Mountain. Officers traveled to the area and discovered an unresponsive male lying in the parking lot near Neighborhood Pharmacy. The individual was transported via ambulance to JFL where he succumbed to his injuries.

The victim was identified by his next of kin as 30-year-old Kaheem Thomas of Canebrake Apartments, Frederiksted.

An investigation revealed that Thomas got into a physical altercation with the pharmacy's security guard, Mr. Derima said. During the altercation, Thomas disarmed the security guard and turned the firearm on himself.

Thomas, who was known to have suffered with mental illness, had been long crying out for help. In September of 2019, Thomas was identified as the man who [assaulted four Head Start employees in Kingshill](#), one of a number of episodes that saw Thomas assaulting innocent individuals.

Governor Albert Bryan in January submitted legislation to the 33rd Legislature to overhaul and reform the territory's mental health system with sweeping changes that address gaps in services to residents who suffer from behavioral health challenges, mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, alcoholism and drug addiction.

The legislation, called the Virgin Islands Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Act, would establish the territory's first behavioral health, mental health, developmental disability and alcohol and substance abuse facility, the administration said.

Mr. Bryan did not immediately respond to request for comment Tuesday.

The investigation into this matter is ongoing. Anyone with information that can assist police in this matter or any other incident is asked to call 911, the Crime TipLine at (340) 778-4950, or Crime Stoppers USVI at (800) 222-TIPS.