

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Man, With Gun In Hand, Shot To Death By Police

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ST. THOMAS -- A man identified by his next of kin as 38-year-old Evan Ezekiel Joseph of Altona, succumbed to his injuries after an encounter with V.I.P.D. officers, according to a press release issued late Saturday by Sakeeka Freeman, the force's media specialist.

The release did not reveal the cause of Mr. Joseph's death, but Police Commissioner Delroy Richards told The Consortium this morning that Mr. Joseph was shot multiple times by police. He said two weapons were recovered from the now-deceased man, and that police only fired shots after Mr. Joseph, with gun in hand, turned towards officers.

According to the release, on Saturday at about 11:33 a.m., the 911 emergency call center received notification from several residents of shots being fired in the area of Simmonds Alley.

Upon arrival to the scene, several residents informed officers that a black male in the vicinity of Simmonds Alley fired several gunshots in the area. After receiving a detailed description of the suspect, the officers located an individual fitting the description. After an encounter with police, the suspect, identified as Mr. Joseph, later succumbed to his injuries at the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital.

In a statement, the V.I.P.D. expressed remorse to the deceased's family and for the outcome of the incident.

"The department would like to express its remorse and sympathy to the relatives of the suspect in this incident, reads the statement. "We would also like to express that we are glad that no other individuals were injured during this matter. We express our concern for our officers, however none of our officers favor having to use force, especially force resulting in death or serious injuries."

The statement also promised a "fair, impartial and thorough" investigation into the matter, but also warned that the V.I.P.D. has zero tolerance for criminal activity, and would act when necessary to keep the community safe.

"This community and the department having little tolerance for violent activity, [and] will act when necessary to ensure our officers and innocent members of the community or visitors are safe and protected from harm," reads the statement.

The case is currently under investigation by the V.I.P.D.'s Force Investigation Team, comprised of members of the Criminal and Internal Affairs Bureaus.

And the force is asking anyone with information about what occurred on Saturday, to contact the Major Crimes Unit at 340-714-9823 ext. 5617, Criminal Investigation Bureau at 340-714-9807 ext. 5556, Crime Stoppers or the Office of the Police Chief at 340-774-2211.