

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Gittens Says There's Talk Of Slain Firefighter Being Case Of Mistaken Identity; Calls For Better Lighting At Firehouse

VIC News / **Published On August 24, 2016 08:56 AM /**

Staff **August 24, 2016**



ST. THOMAS -- Rumors have been running rampant that the [killing of firefighter Gregory Louis](#) at the Hotel Company Fire Station in Charlotte Amalie on Thursday might have been a case of mistaken identity. But Senator Kenneth Gittens is the first official to publicly acknowledge those rumors, given life to speculation as to what really occurred during the fatal incident.

In a press release issued Monday addressing poor lighting at the fire station where the incident occurred, the senator said Fire Service officials should redouble their efforts to

ensure adequate lighting and to help deter future incidents.

"Especially with the talks of this murder incident being a possible case of mistaken identity, we need to protect our firefighters," Mr. Gittens said, without elaborating on such a strong statement.

He went on: "There are no quick-fix solutions for our crime situations but as I work to try to find solutions, we need to look at contributing factors. Nothing is certain, but perhaps more lighting would have deterred this and other criminal activities and perhaps more lighting would allow potential eye witnesses to be more certain of the descriptions of the perpetrator. We look at adopting the broken window theory as a way of crime fighting. Addressing underlying issues like poor lighting, loitering, traffic enforcement and others will get us on the right track."

Mr. Gittens, a former law enforcement officer and vice-chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, said he visited the firehouse on Monday to speak with firefighters, and expressed disappointment that the area, even after the incident, had not been properly lit.

"When I learned of the fatal shooting of Firefighter Gregory Louis, I was concerned. The safety of the firefighters was of great concern and I visited the firehouse on Monday where members of Louis' squad were on duty. I spoke with the firefighters and discussed concerns of the poorly lit area where he was killed. It is a shame that even after this incident that the area in front and around the firehouse remains dimly lit," Mr. Gittens said. He then called on the VI Fire Service management team to open lines of communication with other first responder agencies with access to portable lighting equipment to utilize them until permanent fixtures can be put in the area to ensure the safety of firefighters.

In conclusion, the senator expressed condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Louis, to his firefighter family and others who knew him. He said he extends a plea to the community and anyone who may have information about the crime to call police to report what they know.