

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Sentenced To 135 Years In Prison For 2012 Restaurant Robbery; Shooting Of Police

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ST. CROIX -- On Friday, Virgin Islands Superior Judge Robert Molloy sentenced [Alphonso Butler](#), 27, to 135 years imprisonment for 17 crimes related to a robbery in 2012 at a popular St. Croix restaurant, Eat @ Cane, the V.I. D.O.J. announced this morning.

Judge Molloy told Butler at sentencing that, "You are no different than a terrorist."

On August 18, 2012, gunmen entered the restaurant ordering everyone to hit the floor, and then robbed patrons and the business. As Christopher Howell -- who was the St. Croix police chief at the time -- and Officer Elsworth Jones responded, Mr. Howell was

shot in his back and Jones in the face by persons in a car that was leaving the vicinity of



Former St. Croix Police Chief Christopher

Howell

Mr. Butler was tried in July 2016, and the jury found him guilty on all 17 charges, including attempted first degree murder. Mr. Howell appeared at sentencing to give a victim's impact statement, and he stated that the incident has permanently changed his life in that he has had 10 surgeries so far, and constantly experiences great physical pain.

"The lengthy sentence imposed by the judge is entirely appropriate and we staunchly support Judge Molloy's decision," said Virgin Islands Attorney General Claude Walker after the sentencing. "We are satisfied that the judge accepted our recommendation for the statutory maximum for each conviction which, in essence, totaled to imprisonment of over 100 years. The sentence is consistent with the Attorney General's Office newly adopted sentencing recommendations for certain crimes, including seeking prison terms, of great severity, for any person convicted of any violent crime involving a gun, as the sacredness of human life must be respected by all."

Co-defendants are scheduled for trial on December 12, 2016.

The newly adopted recommendations for sentencing implemented by Mr. Walker's office, also resulted in [the life sentence of Alan Archibald](#) for raping and impregnating a minor in St. Thomas.