

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Man Pleads Guilty To 2013 Murder At Coki Point Beach; Faces No More Than 5 Years After Accepting Plea Deal

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A St. Thomas man has taken responsibility for a killing on one of the island's popular beaches three years ago. Craig King, above, age 34, has pleaded guilty to the Oct. 14, 2013, murder of Jumore Lewis, 20, who was shot and killed at Coki Point Beach in Smith Bay.

Mr. King was scheduled to stand trial later this month on six charges – second-degree murder, first-degree assault, third-degree assault, first-degree reckless endangerment, unauthorized use of a firearm during the commission of a crime of violence and involuntary manslaughter – in connection with the crime, but rather than face a jury, he accepted the terms of a plea agreement.

Mr. King appeared in court on Thursday for a change of plea hearing and stood before V.I. Superior Court Judge Denise Francois to formally admit to the crime. Under the terms of the plea agreement offered by the attorney general's office, Mr. King entered a guilty plea to involuntary manslaughter and the remaining counts against him were dismissed. He is facing a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, according to Attorney General Claude Walker, speaking to The Consortium late Friday.

Judge Francois accepted the guilty plea and has set Jan. 10, 2017 as the date for Mr. King's sentencing as she awaits a pre-sentence report.

Mr. King was arrested Nov. 9, 2013, following an interview with investigators, during which he confessed to killing Lewis. He was released from custody after posting an \$89,000 bail.

According to the affidavit of police detective, Mark Leslie Thomas, Mr. King was at the beach with his girlfriend, Akilah Godet, when a fight broke out among several persons and shots were fired. When King looked behind him, he saw Godet lying on the ground and observed that she had been shot. When Mr. King tried to pick up Godet, he realized she was lifeless.

Mr. King noticed that Lewis was holding a gun and King shot at Lewis multiple times, killing him, according to Thomas' affidavit.

Mr. King remains on bail pending his sentencing.