

The Virgin Islands Consortium

McDonald's Restaurant Where Robbery And Hostage Incident Occurred To Remain Closed For Investigation

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Last updated: March 27, 4:25 a.m. ST. THOMAS -- The McDonald's restaurant located at Lockhart Gardens in Sugar Estate that was [the scene of a robbery and hostage incident](#) ending with the death of one of three suspects, will remain closed while the Virgin Islands Police Department conduct its investigation, Arcos Dorados, franchise owner of McDonald's U.S. Virgin Islands, and McDonald's largest franchisee in the world in terms of systemwide sales and number of restaurants, made known in a statement issued today.

"We are focused on assisting our employees who were working in the restaurant and cooperating with the authorities during the investigation process. The restaurant will

remain closed until the investigation is completed and the area secured," reads a portion of the statement.

The incident, which occurred just before 11:00 p.m. on Saturday night, left one suspect dead after engaging in a shootout with police, and two other suspects with minor injuries, V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Glen Dratte announced Sunday afternoon. Police Commissioner Delroy Richards had previously told The Consortium that there were four suspects, three of which were in custody and the fourth, shot by police, had succumbed to his wounds.

The commissioner said the deceased suspect was killed after firing at police.

"Unfortunately, when you become bold enough to become involved in criminal actions like that, you have to be prepared to suffer the consequences," Mr. Richards said. "My guys responded and they did what they were trained to do as professionals."

Three armed Hispanic suspects stormed the McDonald's restaurant in Sugar Estate to rob the establishment, consequently holding hostage several customers who were dining, according to the V.I.P.D.

Police were alerted of the robbery while it was ongoing, and immediately responded by hustling to the scene. Upon their arrival, police observed the suspects and surrounded the area, Mr. Richards said. An exchange of gunfire between at least one of the suspects and police officers ensued, which ultimately led to the death of the suspect. Mr. Richards said none of the customers dining at the McDonald's restaurant were injured during the ordeal.

The two suspects who were injured sustained their wounds from shotgun pellets emanating from their own weapons -- and not by guns belonging to police officers, according to the commissioner.

Last night's incident was the latest in a series of robbery crimes affecting St. Thomas, with Hispanic males appearing to be the culprits, according to Mr. Richards. Earlier this week, [the Pony Parlor was robbed at gunpoint](#), with three assailants escaping with an untold amount of cash.

"Those three individuals that entered were described as Hispanic males," Mr. Richards said. "The suspects for the McDonald's robbery were carrying similar weapons that were described by the folks at the Pony Parlor, and they were also described as Hispanics, so there are some similarities."

St. Thomas District Police Chief, Jason Marsh, said, "[I] would like to thank the community for having the courage to make the calls when they see something. I would also like to thank the officers of this police department for bringing this incident to a close without injury to any of the hostages in the business."

The chief also offered condolences to the family of the individual who died from gunshot injuries sustained during the incident.

The chief concluded by stating that the community must continue to work together to prevent the selective few from holding the community hostage, reeking fear in residents.

"We will continue to vigorously confront the criminal elements," he said.

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