

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Slain Suspect In McDonald's Hostage And Robbery Incident Was A Minor, Police Chief Comfirms

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ST. THOMAS -- St. Thomas-St. John District Police Chief, Jason Marsh, said during a press briefing here on Monday that the suspect that was shot by police [during the McDonald's robbery and hostage incident on Saturday night](#) was a minor, as well as one of the two surviving suspects.

Chief Marsh said during the briefing that the deceased minor will be identified by police, as well as the surviving 18-year-old suspect. The other minor will not be identified, at least for now.

Stating that between 5-7 hostages were held up during the incident, Chief Marsh said once officers learned of the incident, law enforcement swarmed the McDonald's restaurant, ensuring that there were no exits for the suspects to escape. He said officers from the V.I.P.D. and the Supreme and Superior courts responded to the incident while it was ongoing. Federal officers responded after, he said.

Chief Marsh also confirmed V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richard's observation that, while yet to be confirmed, there were striking similarities between Saturday night's incident and [the robbery that occurred at the Pony Parlor last week](#): the three men were Hispanics, and they wielded similar weapons.

"As the commissioner said, there are similarities; we'll have to conduct some further investigation before we can definitely say that that it's concrete," Chief Marsh said. "But there are some similarities in the robberies."

On Sunday, Arcos Dorados, franchise owner of McDonald's U.S. Virgin Islands said in a statement that the fast food restaurant [would remain closed](#) until police completed their investigation. As of Monday, Chief Marsh said police were still examining the facility for evidence. "We're still doing some followups, so the establishment is still closed at this time," he said.

As for charges, the Department of Justice will ultimately determine what will be levied against the suspects through an official complaint.

From the onset of the briefing, Chief Marsh praised law enforcement involved not only for their exceptional work and bravery, but also because not a single hostage was injured during the standoff. He also commended the hostages, noting their courage to contact law enforcement during what must have been a traumatic experience for them.

"Those hostages endured a lot through a traumatic experience, and we want to recognize them for their bravery," he said.

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 located in the Lockhart Gardens Shopping Center 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.

Saturday 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. Last 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.”

V.I.P.D. Media Specialist told The Consortium on Monday that the V.I.P.D. was working on making available the mugshots of two of the three men involved -- the deceased and the 18-year-old.

Feature Image: McDonald's testing kitchen located at the company's global headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois.