

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Police Release Names Of Teens Involved In McDonald's Hostage And Robbery Incident

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Hanselo Recio, 18

ST. THOMAS -- The Virgin Islands Police Department has revealed the names of two of the three teens involved in the [deadly hostage and robbery incident](#) that occurred at the McDonald's restaurant in the Lockhart Gardens Shopping Center on Saturday night.

The deceased suspect has been identified as Juan De Dios, age 17, who was in 10th grade at the Charlotte Amalie High School. Mr. Dios -- identified by his mother following the incident -- was born in Santo Domingo, D.R.

The surviving 18-year-old has been identified as Hanselmo Joseph Feliz Recio, pictured above. He was arrested on Monday after being released from the Schneider Regional Medical Center, according to police. The V.I.P.D. has determined that it will not release the name of the third suspect because he is a surviving minor.

Mr. Recio was levied with multiple charges -- including third-degree assault, grand larceny, possession of an unlicensed firearm during the commission of a crime, and brandishing a firearm. He was held after failing to post \$200,000 bond.

St. Thomas-St. John District Police Chief, Jason Marsh, revealed on Monday during a press briefing here that Mr. Dios was one of two minors involved in the incident, along with the 18-year-old.

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.

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 Mr. Dios dead after engaging in a shootout with police, while leaving Mr. Recio and a minor injured. Mr. 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 that Mr. Dios 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.”

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 Mr. Dios and police officers ensued, which ultimately led to the 17-year-old's death.

The Mr. Recio and the minor who was 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.”