

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Feds Arrest Four Men In McDonald's Robbery

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ST. THOMAS -- Hanselo Recio, 18, Betel Paulino, 18, and Junior Feliz, 22, of the Dominican Republic, and Helwood Paris, 20, of Puerto Rico, made their initial appearances today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ruth Miller, Acting U.S. Attorney Joycelyn Hewlett announced today. The men were detained pending detention hearings to be scheduled.

Each of the four men is charged with Hobbs Act robbery, conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery, possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, conspiracy to possess a firearm during a crime of violence, and territorial charges of robbery, possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, and possession of a firearm in a public housing zone, Acting United States Attorney Joycelyn Hewlett announced.

On Monday, the V.I.P.D. announced that the sole deceased suspect of the March 25 incident, Juan De Dios, [committed suicide](#).

According to the information, on March 25, members of the Virgin Islands Police Department (V.I.P.D.) responded to reports of a robbery at the McDonald's restaurant in Lockhart Shopping Center on St. Thomas. After an exchange of gunfire, Recio, who was inside McDonald's surrendered and was taken into custody. The follow-up investigation identified Paulino, Feliz and Paris as the remaining persons involved in the robbery.

The penalty for conviction of Hobbs Act robbery or the local robbery charge is up to 20 years, and for the federal charge of possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, it is a mandatory 10-year consecutive sentence. For the territorial possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, the penalty is up to 15 years and for possession of a firearm in a public housing zone, the penalty is up to 30 years.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the VIPD. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sigrid M. Tejo-Sprotte.

Acting United State Attorney Hewlett reminds the public that an information is merely a formal charging document and is not evidence of guilt. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.