

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Officer, Now Fired, Allegedly Shared Identifying Information Of People Who Filed Police Reports

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A former police officer who was fired about a month ago, according to V.I.P.D. Commissioner Delroy Richards, is believed to have leaked sensitive information of multiple persons to someone outside of the V.I.P.D., in what the force is describing as an apparent attempt at identity theft.

The commissioner said the information breach included identifying information such as social security numbers, date of birth and names. However, the breach did not include information provided to the V.I.P.D. by informants, and that none of the force's cases were compromised because of it.

"We're still trying to determine the amount of reports that might have been breached, but we know so far that it could be about three or four" that were compromised, Mr. Richards said. The commissioner said persons making police reports are usually asked to provide a name, date of birth, address and sometimes social security number.

The commissioner said the force is concerned about the breach because it could be a widespread situation. "If we had the names of the affected people we would inform them, but that's not the case, so we still have to get the information out there," Mr. Richards said.

The V.I.P.D. has a large database of residents because of the important role it plays in society. For example, everyone with a driver's license has sensitive information stored in the force's database. But the information breached was limited to persons who made police reports, according to Mr. Richards.

"By law, if it is determined that there might have been some breach of information within the department, whether it be information such as a police report with the person's name, address and social security -- along that line, once we suspect that there might have been a breach and sensitive information might have been revealed, we have an obligation to report it to the public," the commissioner said.

Mr. Richards said that the V.I.P.D. suspects that a male officer, who the force fired a month ago, was mostly likely behind the alleged identity theft incident. Even so, the former officer, whose identity was not revealed, has yet to be charged because the V.I.P.D.'s investigation is ongoing. Once the force completes its investigation, other actions may be taken, the commissioner said.

The force is asking residents in both districts who have submitted police reports, to pay attention to their credit reports and notify authorities of any suspicious activities. "In a nutshell that's what it was, identity theft," Mr. Richards said.