

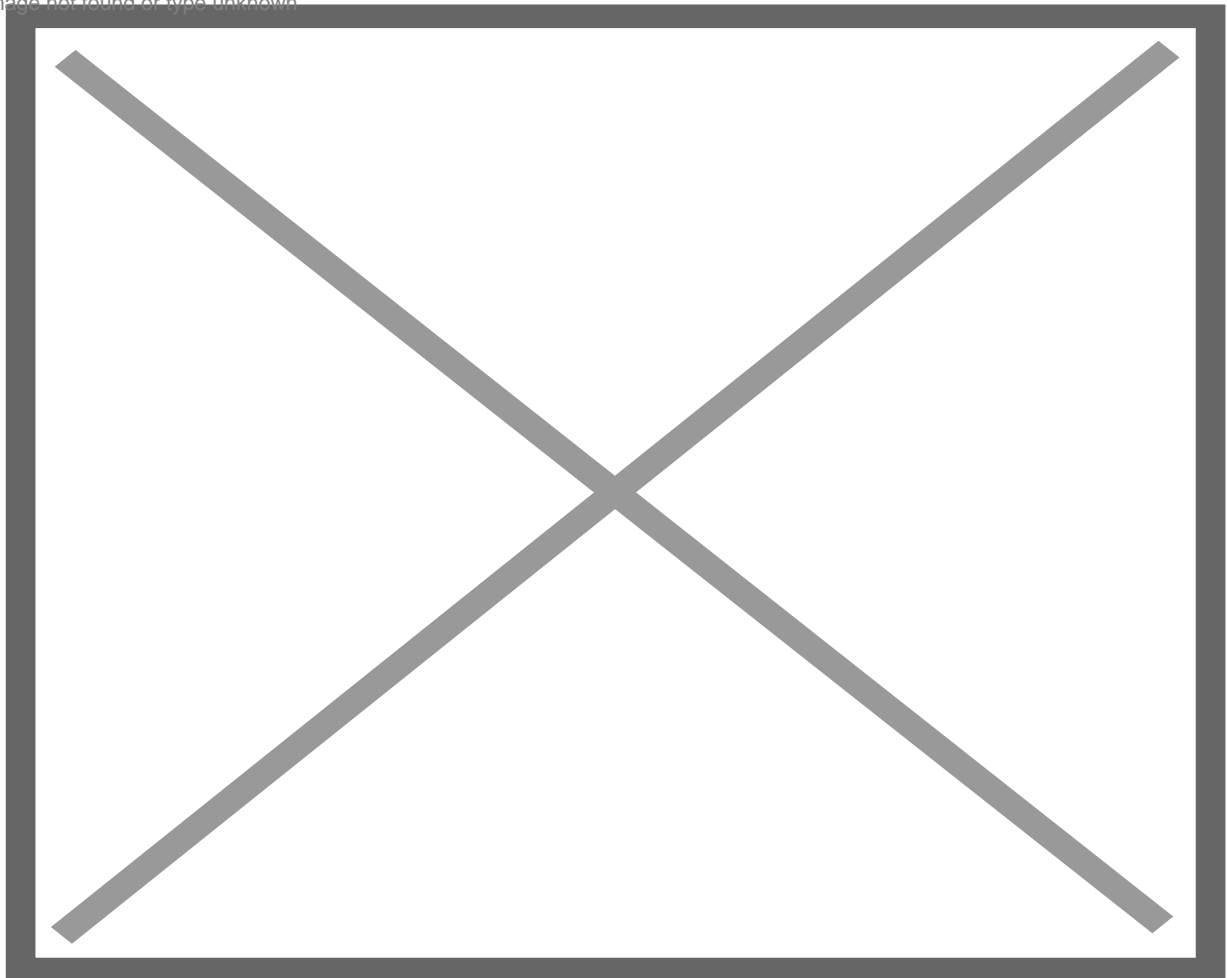
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Monday Digest: USVI Homicides Now 40 for 2020 After Deadly Sunday; 20 Covid-19 Cases Reported Over Weekend; New Company Selected for Contact Tracing; Man Pardoned by Mapp is Arrested; Oriental Bank Ordered to Compensate Customers, and Much More

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Law enforcement officers blocked a portion of the Melvin Evans Highway, heading west beginning at the Economic Development Authority's (EDA) Industrial Park intersection, as they investigated the homicide on Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020. By. VI CONSORTIUM

Welcome to the fourth edition of "The Monday Digest", a new series on VI Consortium that helps our readers start the week with excerpts of stories that occurred over the weekend.

Before we get into it, [download our app](#). It will save you time and you won't ever have to miss another big story on VI Consortium again.

Below, the top weekend stories:

A deadly Sunday

Two homicides an hour and districts apart brought the territory's total homicide count for 2020 to 40, a staggering number with three and a half more months before the year ends.

The first incident [occurred in St. Thomas at the Oswald Harris Court](#) housing community in the vicinity of the basketball court at around 2:13 p.m., according to police spokesman Toby Derima. The St. Thomas victim, identified by next of kin as Secori Akeel Elmes, sustained multiple gunshot wounds and succumbed to his injuries on the scene. He was 31 years old.

The second incident, which was reported to the 911 Emergency Call Center at about 3:07 p.m., left a 20-year-old woman dead.

The victim, who was identified by family members on the scene as Reynisha Juanita Rivera, [was attacked while driving on the Melvin Evans Highway](#) in her black Acura TSX. The assailants fired shots at her vehicle beginning at the EDA's Industrial Park Intersection until the chase ended with the victim's death near a Hispanic church heading west.

Dept. of Health Selects Atlanta-Based Company for Contact Tracing App

The V.I. Department of Health confirmed to the Consortium that it had [selected InductiveHealth Informatics](#) to perform Covid-19 contact tracing work in the territory. The deal costs \$220,040 with a 1-year renewal option. The new agreement follows a scandal that [rocked](#) the Bryan administration after D.O.H. had chosen a company owned by Mr. Bryan's daughter and his good friend for the job, even though the company had no experience in the field of contact tracing.

The company, Avera, had initially charged \$1.8 million to perform the work but was negotiated to \$1 million for three years. D.O.H. had chosen the company within 72 hours in a no-bid process the department had justified under exigency guidelines.

Man Pardoned by Mapp is Arrested on Drug, Firearm Charges

A man named Damon C. John who was pardoned by former Governor Kenneth Mapp before Mr. Mapp left office [was arrested Thursday night](#) after police found bags of drugs and a loaded firearm in his vehicle during a traffic initiative.

John had multiple bags and at least two canisters of marijuana in his vehicle along with the loaded firearm when stopped by police. He was placed under arrest and charged with possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, along with possession of a firearm.

20 Covid-19 Cases Reported Over the Weekend

The V.I. Department of Health over the weekend reported [20 new Covid-19 cases](#) territory-wide as infections fluctuate but remain lower than previous [highs](#). D.O.H. was tracking 58 active cases as of Sunday, with a total of 1,144 recoveries and 19 fatalities. Of the 58 active cases being tracked, 6 were on St. Croix, 50 on St. Thomas and 2 on St. John.

Oriental Bank Ordered to Compensate Customers

The bank's [bungled transition](#) from Scotiabank's system to its own caused much pain to customers, and the V.I. Banking Board [has ordered](#) Oriental take the following actions:

- Provide the Board with a report that identifies customers who suffered a financial hardship or were assessed any fees as a consequence of not having access to their funds during the conversion period.
- Reimburse customers for costs expended on fees, resources, and banking products such as deposit slips, checks drawn on the former bank, and other items should these products be rendered obsolete.
- Demonstrate compliance of COVID-19 health measures for staff and customers or be faced with fines for being in violation of these mandated steps.
- Provide the Board with a report of staffing to include new hires and indications of personnel action in terms of a loss of staff from the start period of Oriental Bank's acquisition on December 31, 2019 to present.
- Report to the Board by September 30, 2020 how they have addressed all outstanding issues related to Phase One of the conversion.

In other weekend news, WAPA is considering [the reinstatement of its disconnection policy](#) for customers who fail to pay their electrical and potable water bills; the V.I. Dept. of Justice [lacks workers](#) in its Paternity and Child Care Division to manage a caseload of 8,600, and D.O.J.'s rent at the Nisky Center climbs to \$320,000 for 2021; the territory experienced [multiple small earthquakes](#) between Saturday and Sunday; a PUMA gas station in St. Thomas was [robbed at gunpoint](#); and a bill sponsored by Senators Janelle Sarauw and Kenneth Gittens that seeks to halt the development of gas stations in the USVI for five years, [crossed the first hurdle](#).

Our previous Monday Digest can be read [here](#).