

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mother of Teen Accused of Wanting to Shoot up Complex Says Rumor False

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ST. CROIX —The mother of a teenage boy who has been accused of planning to shoot up the St. Croix Educational Complex today, said the rumor is a complete hoax and that he was targeted because he is white.

In a release issued late Thursday night, V.I.P.D. Public Information Officer Toby Derima said that police on St. Croix were investigating an alleged threat to the high school circulating on social media that claims a student intends to open fire on the campus Friday.

In a conference call with Dept. of Education Commissioner Racquel Berry Benjamin and senior D.O.E. officials on Thursday night, Police Commissioner Trevor Velinor indicated that officers were actively working leads and contacting students who may have received the threatening message via text earlier in the day, the police report said.

According to the mother, however, the rumor is the farthest thing from the truth.

"What happened was some kids in his school made up this rumor because he is white, saying he is going to shoot up the school," the boy's mother told the Consortium this morning. "He is a good kid, he has never gotten in trouble for anything. He does extra stuff at school and there's never been any sought of threat. He doesn't have any psychiatric problems; he doesn't have access to a gun. Yeah, it's because he's white."

She added, "We keep getting all these messages that people are sending out saying white boy is going to shoot up the school and how their parents are treating it, and it's really kind of awful."

The mother said she spoke with the police detective investigating the matter and gave a statement. "Now I'm going to meet with the principal of the school," she said.

Mr. Derima told the Consortium this morning that the V.I.P.D. was not certain how credible the rumor was and therefore had to exercise protocol. He later stated, "We don't have anything further than what we put out last night and this morning. However, please keep in mind that the Police Department, we basically approached this as we got a report and we looked into it just to make sure that there wasn't going to be any laws broken. This was just alleged, and that's basically where we are with it. We were just looking into it from the standpoint of public safety, just making sure that it was not going to be an issue. We can't really comment or say anything as to what the mother is alleging; we only can work with the actual incident as it was reported to us."

According to reports circulating on social media, a text from a student claimed the teenager intended to shoot up the school Friday. The text, which gave little context, quickly went viral on social media platforms. It was later sent to the Dept. of Education and police were alerted.

The V.I.P.D. is asking anyone with information about this matter to call 911 or send an anonymous tip to Crime Stoppers USVI [here](#).