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Man Allegedly Shot Dead by Off-Duty Police Officer After Driving Up to Bar and Opening Fire; Four Patrons Injured; FBI Support Requested

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Ernice Gilbert **January 20, 2022**

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ST. THOMAS — Four patrons, including three males and one female at a bar in Contant were injured by gunfire just before midnight Wednesday when persons in a vehicle drove up to the facility and opened fire, the V.I. Police Department has announced. An officer inside the facility, who was off duty, was forced to protect himself and other patrons by drawing his weapon and returning fire at the suspects, according to police.

The officer managed to shoot one of the individuals in the vehicle. The vehicle eventually drove about half a mile before coming to a halt in Upper Contant, Police Commissioner Ray Martinez has confirmed to the Consortium. There, responding officers and Emergency Medical Technicians met a deceased victim, identified by next of kin as 41-year-old Henry Richards, Jr. A firearm was

recovered on his person, according to police. The incident occurred at about 11:40 p.m.

"A preliminary investigation revealed that that victim may have been fatally injured by the off-duty officer," the commissioner said.

He added, "The preliminary investigation indicates that the gunshot victim who expired was one of the suspects and that a firearm was found on his person."

According to a V.I.P.D. news release issued late Thursday afternoon, the victims were transported to the Schneider Regional Medical Center via ambulance for medical attention.

The V.I.P.D confirmed to the Consortium that Wednesday night's incident was the second shooting at the Contant bar in the last two weeks. Police sources who requested anonymity to speak on the matter said the owner of the facility was shot in both instances.

Mr. Martinez told the Consortium that the V.I.P.D. has already requested federal help for the investigation. "The V.I.P.D. has reached out to the FBI and requested that they also assist in investigating the case," he said.

A second male suspect remains at large and the V.I.P.D. said it is collecting evidence in an attempt to identify and apprehend him.

St. Thomas-St. John Police Chief Barrington Thomas, Sr. expressed frustration at those who use violence to resolve disputes. "We must find better ways to deal with issues instead of resorting to gun violence," Chief Thomas said.

Detectives urged anyone who has information about this shooting to contact police by calling 911, the Major Crime Unit at (340) 714-5554 or (340) 714-5555, or Crime Stoppers USVI at (800) 222-8477, where your tip can earn you a reward.

Correction: Jan. 21, 2022

A previous version of this story, because of a text error, said in the first paragraph that the shooting occurred Thursday. The shooting occurred late Wednesday just before midnight, and we've updated the story to reflect the correction information.