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Former Public Works Commissioner Gustav James Shot in the Neck by His Son

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Mugshot of Jelani James. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — Former Dept. of Public Works Commissioner Gustav James, who served during the Mapp administration and was also a member of the V.I. Water and Power Authority board, was shot in the neck by his son, Jelani James early Saturday, people familiar with the incident confirmed to the Consortium.

A day earlier, Gustav had secured bail for Jelani and agreed to serve as a third-party custodian following Jelani's arrest on home invasion and burglary charges in an unrelated matter.

Home Invasion and Burglary Incident

An adult male called the 911 Emergency Call Center and reported an intruder in his home during the wee hours of Thursday morning. He stated that while asleep in his bedroom at his Estate Whim home, he woke up to find a black male individual standing over him in his underwear with a metal object in his hands.

The victim stated that he jumped out of his bed at which point a struggle ensued, and he was able to evade the intruder and retreat to a bathroom in the house where he called 911 for help.

The victim further stated that the intruder made entry into the bathroom, which prompted the victim to run out of the house and escape from danger in his vehicle — leaving the intruder on the roadway.



Gustav James appeared for many Senate hearings during his tenure in the Mapp administration as Public Works commissioner. (Credit: V.I. Legislature)

Officers in the area were able to locate and detain the suspect, who was identified by the victim as 44-year-old Jelani James. Jelani was arrested and charged with home invasion, first-degree burglary, and second-degree burglary. He was booked and transported to the John Bell Correctional Facility, also known as the Golden Grove Correctional Facility, pending his advisement hearing which took place Friday.

Jelani Shoots His Father

After appearing in court before Magistrate Judge Brow Ross, Jelani was released into the custody of his father, Gustav, following the Friday advisement hearing.

However, at 1:49 a.m. Saturday, Gustav called the 911 Emergency Call Center requesting assistance with Jelani, who Gustav said was being non-compliant.

According to the V.I.P.D., Jelani pushed his father out of an apartment that is part of a family-owned rental units property. While the father was outside using his mobile phone to reach the 911 Emergency Call Center, Jelani took his father's firearm from the father's bag and fired multiple rounds through a window, hitting his father in the neck area, the V.I.P.D. said.

The gunshot wound was non-fatal, and Gustav was able to drive himself to the Juan F. Luis Hospital for treatment.

According to the V.I.P.D., entry was made into the rental unit by the Special Operations Bureau, and Jelani was arrested without incident and the firearm was recovered. He was processed and taken to the Golden Grove Correctional Facility pending his advisement hearing scheduled for Monday.