

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Ricardo Richards Secures Release After Posting \$190,000 in Property Bond

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Mugshot of Ricardo Richards. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — One of two men arrested in connection with the double homicide of male minors in Castle Oakley on January 17, 2022, has secured his release from the John A. Bell Correctional Facility pending trial.

Richardo Richards Jr. age 25, was recently arrested on charges of first-degree murder, first-degree attempted murder, first and third-degree assault, unauthorized possession of a firearm, possession of ammunition, discharging or aiming a firearm and reckless endangerment in the first degree.

The other suspect Ozanie I. Cornelius, age 27, was arrested without incident and his residence was searched, according to police.

According to Chief Detective, Lt. Naomi Joseph, the case stems from the January 17, 2022, murders of Odonnie Heywood and Jah'ny Ledesma both 17-years-old, who were shot multiple times while driving through Old Castle Coakley. They were stopped and approached by Cornelius and Richards who were both heavily armed, Cornelius with a handgun and Richards with a high-powered rifle, Lt. Joseph said.

She added, "There were also similarly armed individuals on top of the two-story building in the area, and they all opened fire on the vehicle containing two minors and the adult driver. We collected over two hundred spent casings from the crime scene and the majority was from a high-powered rifle. Mr. Richards also sought medical attention for a gunshot wound that night, however claimed that he was shot at Thomas Bakery in Old Castle Coakley. The minors died instantly, and the adult survived from the multiple gunshot wounds that he sustained."

Richards, who initially was unable to make bail, reappeared before a magistrate on Friday and was able to secure his release by posting property at \$190,000. He was released into the third-party custody of a family member.

Richards will be placed on 24-hour house arrest with the use of an electronic monitor. He is not permitted to leave his grandmother's residence and has to report to the V.I. Police Department every Tuesday between 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He is also to surrender his passport and not obtain a new one.

Richards shall have no contact, directly or indirectly with the complainant or any witnesses and is to maintain a minimum distance of 1,000 ft from them, the judge ruled.

His pre-trial is set for October 11, 2022.