

The Virgin Islands Consortium

16-Year-Old Teen Allegedly Brandished Firearm Prior to His Death, VIPD Says

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The Gottlieb Quickway Service Center.

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Police Department on Tuesday released new findings into the fatal shooting of a teen at the Gottlieb Quickway Service Center on Friday. Investigators now believe the deceased, 16-year-old Leroy Cornelius, Jr., brandished a firearm during an altercation moments before he was shot.

According to the VIPD, on the night of June 9 a distress call at approximately 9:39 p.m. drew responding officers and Emergency Medical Technicians to the scene. Despite their immediate response, the young man was found unresponsive and subsequently

pronounced dead by 9:50 p.m. — eleven minutes after he was shot.

The cause of death was confirmed to be at least one gunshot wound to the upper body. Cornelius was later positively identified by his next of kin.

Preliminary reports from the VIPD indicate that the shooting occurred after a heated verbal exchange between two men inside the Gottlieb Quickway Service Station. During the altercation, Cornelius, who was accompanying one of the men, allegedly produced a firearm. A another individual inside the establishment then shot Cornelius, according to the VIPD.

The tragic event marked the 19th homicide for the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2023, with ten occurring on St. Thomas. Less than 24 hours later, [another 16-year-old boy was shot dead on St. Croix](#), bringing the island's own homicide count to ten. Total homicides for 2023 in the U.S. Virgin Islands now stand at 20.

At this stage of the investigation, no suspects are in custody.

The VIPD is calling on the public to assist with the ongoing inquiry. Anyone with information about the incident is encouraged to call (340) 774-2211, the Criminal Investigation Unit's Major Crimes Division at (340) 642-8449, or Crime Stoppers V.I. at 1(800)222-8477.