

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Man Wounded, Woman Struck by Vehicle in Grove Place as Chaos Unfolded Following Gunshots Near Bar

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VIPD units on the Melvin Evans Highway on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — A man sustained multiple gunshot wounds Tuesday night when assailants in a vehicle opened fire near the Cozy Corner Bar in Grove Place, according to information provided to the Consortium by the VIPD following an inquiry. The VIPD's ShotSpotter system registered 18 gunshot rounds during what was described as a chaotic scene.

The 911 Emergency Call Center was alerted at 7:49 p.m. and dispatched officers to the location. Upon arriving to the scene, police officers made contact with a distressed

female bystander, who explained that she was forced to run for cover as soon as the shots started. In the panic and confusion, several people scrambled to their vehicles to escape the area. In their haste to depart, one of the vehicles inadvertently struck the woman, resulting in minor injuries to her elbows and knees.

Forensic investigators arrived promptly on the scene and worked to gather and catalog evidence. In their sweep of the Cozy Corner premises, investigators collected a total of 18 shell casings and one live round.

As police were working to secure and clear the scene, word came through the police radio that a black male gunshot victim had arrived at the Juan F. Luis Hospital. Officers then traveled to JFL, where they discovered that the victim was the son of the woman involved in the earlier auto accident. It was later determined that he had been transported to the hospital in a red Acura, which was found riddled with bullet holes on the driver's side. The vehicle was subsequently processed by the VIPD's Identification Division.

The victim sustained severe injuries, including a gunshot wound to his chest, under his left arm, and two to his back. Despite his critical condition, the medical team at JFL managed to stabilize the victim, who has since been admitted for further care.

The V.I. Police Department has classified the case as an attempted murder. The department is appealing to anyone with information about this incident to come forward to assist with the ongoing investigation.

Tuesday night's shooting and police response comes in the wake of [the death of Police Detective Delberth Phipps](#), a 42-year-old ["rising star" and second-generation officer](#), according to Police Commissioner Ray Martinez. Phipps was shot to death in Hospital Ground, St. Thomas by Richardson Dangleben, who in February [confessed to shooting and killing 68-year-old Keith Jennings](#) and was charged with first-degree murder. Dangleben, who claimed he shot Jennings in self-defense, was out on bail when he murdered Detective Phipps. Dangleben was wearing a bulletproof vest that can withstand high-powered rounds, and he had hundreds of rounds of ammunition along with several firearms, the VIPD reported.