



**THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
"To Protect and Serve"  
**Office of the Commissioner**

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**For Immediate Media Distribution**

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**VIPD OFFICER SHOT AND KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY**

**St. Thomas, USVI** - On Tuesday, July 4, 2023, at about 7:53 a.m. the 911 Emergency Call Center received notification of a male individual carrying a firearm while wearing a bullet proof vest in the vicinity of Hospital Ground near "Jah Yard".

Upon officers' arrival, the suspect fired upon them with a high-powered assault rifle. Responding officers immediately engaged the suspect. During the exchange of gunfire, Detective Delberth Phipps, Jr., a 7-year veteran and the suspect were injured. Both were transported to Roy Lester Schneider Regional Medical Center for treatment where Detective Phipps, age 42, succumbed to his injuries.

Police Commissioner Ray A. Martinez added "today is that day no department wants to experience. The loss of our Detective, Officer, and Brother has sent ripples through the Department. Detective Phipps made the ultimate sacrifice to **Protect and Serve** his community, our community! Detective Phipps a second-generation Police Officer was a rising star and will be sorely missed. I extend heartfelt condolences to his family as well as our VIPD family."

VIPD Police Chief Steven Phillips said Phipps' death represents a "tremendous loss" for the agency, I am completely lost for words. "We've lost a dear colleague" Chief Phillips said. "Detective Phipps, was truly an outstanding Detective and individual. We are truly heartbroken."

The suspect, 50-year-old Richardson Dangleben Jr. is in custody. Preliminary investigation reveals Dangleben was wearing a bulletproof vest and armed with an assault rifle, handgun, and several hundred rounds of ammunition. Dangleben was out on bail for the February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, First Degree Murder of Keith A. Jennings in Hospital Ground.

This investigation is ongoing.

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