

## Number 5 of 10 St. Croix Women in Tax Fraud and Identity Theft Case Pleads Guilty

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced today that Thema Liverpool, age 31, of St. Croix, pleaded guilty on November 18, 2019 to conspiracy to defraud the United States. According to the plea agreement filed with the court, from January 2011 to July 2012, Liverpool and others participated in a scheme to steal money from the United States treasury by fraudulently obtaining federal income tax refunds. The scheme involved the acquisition of personal identifying information used to electronically file falsified tax returns for tax years 2010 and 2011.

According to court documents, Liverpool and nine co-conspirators filed tax returns using individuals' true names, actual social security numbers and dates of birth but falsified information regarding the individuals' income earned, tax withholding amounts, credits,

and other information. The scheme allowed Liverpool and others to claim tax refunds to which they were not entitled. Liverpool and her co-conspirators designated bank accounts for receipt of the refunds, which, once received, they withdrew and spent for personal use. As a result of the scheme, \$128,040 was designated to Hughes' bank account, of which \$66,578 was actually deposited therein.

Of ten defendants charged in the tax fraud scheme, Liverpool is the fifth to plead guilty. Four others have entered guilty pleas one of whom has been sentenced. No sentencing date has been set for Liverpool. The remaining five defendants are scheduled for trial in 2020. Liverpool faces a maximum sentence of ten years and a \$250,000 fine.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Alphonso Andrews, Jr. and Melissa Ortiz.