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Stephanie Barnes Sentenced to Over Three Years in Prison

Sentencing verdict delivered by federal judge in high-profile embezzlement case

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Stephanie Barnes reported to the V.I. District Court on St. Croix Monday, Dec. 27, 2021 to begin serving her prison sentence. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — District Court Judge Robert Molloy on Friday sentenced former government contractor Stephanie Barnes to 44 months in prison for her involvement in a scheme to embezzle funds from programs receiving government funds, conversion of government property, and filing a false tax return.

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a 19-page sentencing memorandum [last month](#), justifying the need for a 3.75-year sentence for Ms. Barnes, which is above the basic guideline calculations. This variance was requested to account for Barnes's conviction for violating Virgin Islands tax law and to maintain parity between offenders in the Virgin Islands and the mainland.

Prosecutors detailed how Barnes and co-defendant Anne Golden embezzled funds from the VI Casino Control Commission. Their scheme involved no-bid contracts, underwriting Barnes's doctoral studies, and cash reimbursements for personal expenditures. Barnes also falsified a tax form to understate her 2016 income, significantly reducing her tax liability.

After the scheme was uncovered, [Golden pleaded guilty](#) and was sentenced to 24 months in federal prison. She testified against Barnes, who continued to claim her innocence. Barnes's attorney described the charges as "propaganda." Despite her conviction, Barnes sought a new trial and accused Judge Robert Molloy of bias due to his personal connections with Golden and her family. Her requests to subpoena Governor Albert Bryan Jr. as a defense witness were denied.

Judge Robert Molloy ordered Barnes to serve 33 months for her role in a conspiracy to commit theft, 44 months for illegally converting government property, and a further 12 months for submitting a falsified tax return. These sentences are to be served at the same time, effectively culminating in a 44-month prison term.

Additionally, Barnes is mandated to make a restitution payment totaling over \$247,000 and is subject to a \$10,000 penalty related to the conspiracy charge. To facilitate the payment of the restitution, Barnes is required to join a work program while incarcerated, and any monetary gains from sources such as gifts or lottery winnings will be applied towards the restitution owed.

Prosecutors argued for a carceral sentence as a deterrent, noting Barnes's continued denial of guilt, lack of remorse, and refusal to accept responsibility for her actions. The sentencing memorandum highlighted her persistence in claiming she is owed \$75,000 in payments from the VICCC.