The Virgin Islands Consortium

# Trial For Golden And Barnes To Commence In 2020; Golden Meets Bail Requirements

VIC News / **Published On July 27, 2019 09:30 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert July 27, 2019

ST. THOMAS -- District Court Judge Curtis Gomez on Friday gave Violet Anne Golden and her alleged co-conspirator in a federal 30-count indictment more time to prepare for the case. Attorneys for both Ms. Golden and Ms. Barnes had contended that the indictment -- which Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Brooks said the discovery phase had already generated more than 17,000 pages of financial records and electronic files -- would take months to get documents prepared for the pending trial.

Mr. Brooks said on Thursday that the case “is a fairly complex matter."

Judge Gomez said the additional months would not only give the defendants enough time to prepare, but it would also serve as an opportunity for Ms. Golden and Ms. Barnes to consider a plea agreement and prevent having to battle the federal government on the 30-count indictment. In making his decision to give additional time, Judge Gomez cited the Speedy Trial Act of 1974, which generally requires a federal criminal trial to begin 70 days after a defendant is charged with a crime or has made an initial appearance. Within that time, the defendant may seek a plea deal.

The 70-day window under Judge Gomez's Friday order is set to start mid-January 2020.

Meanwhile, Ms. Golden was able to meet bail requirement and will remain free pending her trial. She had until Thursday to post a $200,000 bond, secured with $50,000 cash or property, and intended to secure bond using a property at 150 Estate Solitude on St. Croix.  On Thursday she handed over the deed to the property, which is valued at $51,000, according to Ms. Golden. But the deed, as of Thursday, was not enough, Judge Miller said at the time.

“It’s not sufficient to meet the court’s needs,” Judge Miller said. “The requirement of posting bond has not been completed.” Judge Miller said Ms. Golden had also submitted financial information suggesting the property is worth less than $51,000. “There is some concern this is not sufficient bond,” the judge said to Ms. Golden.

David Cattie, Ms. Golden’s attorney, told Judge Miller additional records would be provided promptly.

A grand jury handed down the 30-count indictment against Golden and Barnes July 17, alleging the pair conspired to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars in commission funds, converting the money to their own personal use. Among other alleged crimes, they are charged with money laundering, conspiracy and theft of federal program money.

According to the indictment, Ms. Golden and Ms. Barnes used commission money for a variety of personal expenditures, including but not limited to trips to Walt Disney World, tickets to a Broadway production of Hamilton, and making a down payment for the purchase of a vehicle.  Their publicly funded, lavish lifestyle allegedly included travel to a St. Kitts music festival aboard a private jet, stays at a posh Ritz-Carlton hotel in New York and thousands of dollars worth of jewelry and clothing from high-end retailers.

The indictment also alleges that Ms. Golden, who had an annual salary of $105,000, failed to file timely tax returns for the 2014 – 2017 tax years.