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Barnes Hit with New Tax Charge in Casino Control Commission Scandal; Defendants Plead Not Guilty

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Anne Golden, left, and Stephanie Barnes, right. By. Robert Moore, VI Consortium

Federal prosecutors filed a new criminal charge against Stephanie Barnes, a co-conspirator in the V.I. Casino Control Commission corruption scandal involving ex-C.C.C. Director Violet Anne Golden.

U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert's office filed an updated, 31-count indictment in the sweeping fraud and conspiracy case last week, alleging that Ms. Barnes failed last year to file an income tax return with the V.I. Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Ms. Barnes is also accused of filing false tax documents in 2016 and 2017. In 2016, she allegedly reported income of \$35,894 on her IRS Form 1040 – far less actual amounts “stolen and embezzled from the Commission and wages and compensation earned in her

contract,” the superseding indictment read.

Both Ms. Golden and Ms. Barnes were arraigned and pled not guilty at a Wednesday arraignment on charges under the superseding indictment.

A grand jury in July [handed down an initial 30-count indictment against Ms. Barnes and Ms. Golden](#) on charges 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.

During the years in question, Ms. Golden was director of the C.C.C. She hired Ms. Barnes to run a gambling addiction program, though Ms. Barnes had no relevant experience.

The complex white-collar case is scheduled to go to trial in December, but lawyers for the defendants have filed for a continuance of the start date.

The defendants face up to 20 years in prison.