The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Woman Convicted by Jury in Tax Fraud Scheme Sentenced to 3.75 Years in Federal Prison

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Monday that Jacinta Gussie, age 59 of St. Croix was sentenced on November 12 by Federal District Court Judge Wilma A. Lewis to 3.75 years in prison for her part in a complex tax fraud scheme.

Gussie must also serve a period of three years of supervised release and was ordered to pay $44, 561.11 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service. Gussie was found guilty by a federal jury on June 15, 2021 after a six-day trial of Conspiracy to Defraud the United States; four counts of Theft of Government Money; and two counts of aggravated identity theft.

According to court documents and evidence presented at the trial, from January 2011 to July 2012, Jacinta Gussie 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 of Virgin Islanders (i.e. name, social security number, and date of birth) used to electronically file falsified tax returns with a designation of refunds to the acquired bank accounts or debit cards.

Defendant and her co-conspirators withdrew the deposited refunds. They subsequently spent the funds, using a debit card, or transferred the funds to other accounts, all for personal use. As a result of the scheme, approximately $44,561.11 of falsely-claimed returns were deposited into Gussie’s bank accounts. By means of the scheme, the defendants obtained over $400,000 in illegal tax refunds. The defendants also claimed additional refunds totaling in excess of $100,000 that were not paid.

Of ten defendants charged in the tax fraud scheme, Gussie was the tenth defendant to be convicted. Nine others entered guilty pleas, six of whom have been sentenced. Remaining defendants Thema Liverpool, Nicolette Alexander and Lynell Hughes are pending sentencing.

The case is the culmination of years of investigative work by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations, which conducted a probe into a massive stolen identity refund fraud scheme perpetrated in the Virgin Islands and elsewhere.

The case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Melissa P. Ortiz.