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Anne Golden Has Been Out of Prison Since Sept. 24

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Violet Anne Golden with one of her brothers leaving the District Court on St. Croix following a hearing on July 17, 2019. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

Violet Anne Golden, the former chairwoman of the V.I. Casino Control Commission who was convicted and sentenced to 24 months in prison following an earlier guilty plea to theft of government funds and failing to file an income tax return, has been released from prison.

According to court documents, Ms. Golden, 62, was released on Sept. 24. A source with intimate knowledge of the matter told the Consortium that Ms. Golden has been residing in San Diego and has accepted a subpoena to appear during the Dec. 6 trial of Stephanie Barnes, Ms. Golden's [alleged co-accomplice](#).

According to public documents filed in the case, Golden admitted to diverting nearly \$300,000 in Commission funds for her own personal benefit and the benefit of others through bank wires, writing Commission checks, and using Commission credit cards. In addition, Golden failed to timely file an income tax return, despite earning an annual salary of \$105,000.

Ms. Golden was taken into custody on January 14, 2020, following the entry of her guilty pleas in federal court and had been in custody since that time.

U.S. Attorney Shappert praised the Office of the Virgin Island Inspector General, IRS-Criminal Investigations and the FBI for their important work in this investigation. "Territorial and federal investigators have worked tirelessly to expose this serious abuse of the public trust. We hope that yesterday's sentencing will remind everyone that public officials are not above the law."

Special Agent in Charge Michael J. De Palma, of IRS Criminal Investigation, Miami Field Office, said, "High ranking officials perpetrating a fraud scheme by utilizing funds from the Government of the Virgin Islands betray the public's trust. We are all responsible for abiding by the tax laws, regardless of anyone's position of authority. Choosing not to file a tax return is a crime punishable by law. The IRS Criminal Investigation is committed to investigating individuals who violate their tax responsibilities. IRS-CI, with assistance from the Virgin Islands Bureau of Internal Revenue will continue our collective efforts to enforce the law and foster public trust."

Stephanie Barnes Case

U.S. Attorney Shappert along with assistant attorneys Jill Koster and Evan Rikhye on Nov. 23 sought dismissal from the court of three of six charges against Ms. Barnes.

Ms. Shappert and her assistant attorneys moved to dismiss without prejudice counts 21, 25, and 31 of the superseding 31-count indictment against Ms. Barnes "so as to streamline the issues and evidence to be presented at the December 6, 2021 trial," according to [court documents](#) obtained by the Consortium.

Ms. Barnes is still facing charges on counts 5, 23 and 30. On count 5, Ms. Barnes is accused of conspiracy to commit theft from programs and receiving federal funds in violation of U.S. law. On count 23, she is accused of receipt of stolen government monies in violation of Virgin Islands law. And on count 30, Ms. Barnes is accused of filing a false tax return in violation of Virgin Islands law.

The defendant had sought a motion to continue which would have rescheduled the Dec. 6 court trial into the future. However, the court denied the request, according to [court documents](#).

"The government reiterates that it has not sought and is not seeking a continuance of the trial in this case. Nor has the government collected discovery or timed its discovery productions in an effort to bring about a continuance of the trial," the federal government said. Citing a number of precedents, the federal government further stated, "Once materials are obtained by the United States, it must meet its discovery obligations."

The charges stem from a November 21, 2019 federal grand jury 31-count superseding indictment charging Ms. Golden and Ms. Barnes with [a long-running scheme](#) to steal and embezzle money from the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission.