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St. Croix Woman Sentenced to 18 Months in Federal Prison for Involvement in Multi-Defendant Tax Fraud Scheme

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ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Thursday that Thema Liverpool, age 33, from St. Croix was sentenced on December 2 in federal court by Judge Wilma A. Lewis to eighteen months incarceration, followed by three years of supervised release for her involvement in a multi-defendant tax fraud scheme.

Liverpool also must pay restitution of \$83,111.71 to the Internal Revenue Service, the amount of falsely claimed tax return proceeds deposited into her bank accounts as a result of the scheme. The defendant pleaded guilty on November 18, 2019 to Conspiracy to Defraud the United States.

According to the plea agreement filed with the court, from January 2011 to July 2012, Thema Liverpool 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 individuals (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, spent them using a debit card, or transferred them to other accounts, all for personal use.

Of ten defendants charged in the tax fraud scheme, Liverpool is one of nine to plead guilty. The tenth defendant, Jacinta Gussie, was found guilty in June of 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. Jacinta Gussie was sentenced on November 12, 2021 to 3.75 years of prison and ordered to pay \$44,561.11 in restitution.

The prosecution of this fraud scheme is the result of years of investigative work by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations, which identified and dismantled 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 Ortiz.