

logo not found or type unknown

Building Case of Alleged Web of Conflicts of Interest, Stephanie Barnes Demands Recusal of Judge Molloy, New Trial

Crime / **Published On June 02, 2022 04:38 PM /**

Ernice Gilbert **June 02, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



Stephanie Barnes reported to the V.I. District Court on St. Croix Monday, Dec. 27, 2021 to begin serving her prison sentence. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

Stephanie Barnes, recently convicted on three federal charges has filed a motion seeking the removal of Judge Robert Molloy from her case, claiming that she wasn't afforded a fair trial because of Judge Molloy's alleged circle of close friends — among them Ms. Barnes's co-conspirator Violet Anne Golden, Governor Albert Bryan, Attorney Kye Walker and Superior Court Judge Jessica Gallivan.

Ms. Barnes said those relationships and others influenced the case's outcome, and she is therefore "demanding a new trial" with another judge untied to what she alleges is the judge's web of connections that were disadvantageous to her case.

The motion, filed Wednesday, claims that Judge Molloy and Ms. Golden are very close friends. "Violet Anne Golden and the entire Golden family are close and personal friends with Judge Molloy and his entire family, and have been so before Judge Molloy was born," said Ms. Barnes, claiming that those words came from Ms. Golden. The judge, she claimed, emphatically denied any close friendship with Ms. Golden during a pre-trial conference call, stating that he was in second grade when Ms. Golden was in either high school or college. Ms. Barnes further stated that Judge Molloy said he was the one who sentenced Ms. Golden, and that the only reason the court was lenient with Ms. Golden was because her mother had died while she was incarcerated. Ms. Golden was [sentenced to two years in federal prison in 2020](#).

Ms. Barnes also sought to weave Judge Gallivan into the equation, claiming, "Golden also considers Gallivan a close friend," while Gallivan has claimed Ms. Golden is her cousin," according to Ms. Barnes. The point of contention based on Ms. Barnes's claims is that Judge Gallivan served as an influence in the case because Judge Molloy has discussed the trial with his Superior Court counterpart.

Judge Molloy twice struck down the defense's request to subpoena Governor Albert Bryan as a witness, according to Ms. Barnes's filing. "As a matter of fact, Judge Molloy considers Governor Bryan his close, personal friend," Ms. Barnes wrote, adding that the governor "was an important witness" to her defense and would have "testified to my professional experiences as a trainer and program developer..."

During the trial in December, the prosecution said and defense Attorney Webster later confirmed that Ms. Barnes was paid \$1,700 per person to teach V.I. Casino Control Commission employees about sexual harassment and gambling addiction. The prosecution said that the training lasted for one hour, while the defense argued it was for up to four hours. Additionally, Ms. Barnes's PhD was paid for by the V.I.C.C.C. and totaled over \$44,000. "She is Dr. Barnes because the people of the Virgin Islands paid for her degree," Asst. U.S. Attorney Jill Koster said at the time.

Ms. Barnes said in her motion that if the governor had been allowed to testify, he would have praised her for her professionalism in multiple work categories. Mr. Bryan would have testified that "I had a stellar record as a trainer as publicly lauded by Governor de Jongh, the governor we both served."

She also stated, "Governor Bryan would have testified that he did not hold a certification in the studies of gambling addiction, nor had any experience with training casino employees on gambling behavior. He would have to testify that he provided training to casino employees without first obtaining a V.I.C.C.C. casino vendor's license, which is required to conduct business with any casino in the Virgin Islands."

Reached by the Consortium, Governor Bryan chose not to comment on the claims made by Ms. Barnes.

Regarding Ms. Walker, Ms. Barnes claims that Ms. Walker along with Governor Bryan, Attorney Pamela Colon and Ms. Golden are all friends with Judge Molloy. Ms. Barnes further stated that during a preliminary examination of witnesses, Judge Molloy said he and Ms. Walker were best friends. "It is a known fact that Attorney Kye Walker, the ethics and grievance attorney for Attorney Pamela Colon, who I terminated as my lawyer after she took a substantial amount of

money from me knowing that she was a close personal friend of my adversarial co-defendant, Anne Golden, is the best friend of Attorney Walker."

In the motion, seen [here](#), Ms. Barnes said Antonio "Ricky" Messer, the well-known investigator and jury expert, disclosed what Ms. Barnes described as a "very disturbing incident" which she said occurred on Dec. 24. "Messer stated that on Dec. 24, 2021, the day after my verdict, Judge Molloy motioned him to come to his car while rolling down his car window. According to Messer, Judge Molloy told him that 'his hands were tied in Barnes' case,'" Ms. Barnes said. "One could argue that this statement could mean anything, however, given the plethora of conflicts of interest and semblance of conflicts of interest Judge Molloy has in this case, it can be interpreted as evidence in alignment with his biased decisions and disrespectful verbal and non-verbal behaviors toward me and my attorney during the entire trial."

Mr. Messer, when reached by the Consortium, unequivocally denied Ms. Barnes's claims. "It's totally untrue, such a conversation never took place," he said.

Multiple attempts to reach Mr. Webster, Ms. Barnes's attorney, were unsuccessful.

Ms. Barnes, who was convicted on Dec. 23 by a federal jury, faces 8 years in prison after being found guilty of conspiracy to commit theft from programs and receiving federal funds in violation of U.S. law, receipt of stolen government monies, and filing a false tax return in violation of Virgin Islands law. The prosecution proved that she was a willing partner with Ms. Golden, the former V.I.C.C.C. chair.