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Violet Anne Golden Taken into Custody After Pleading Guilty to Theft of Government Funds and Failing to File Tax Return

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Violet Anne Golden with one of her brothers leaving the District Court on St. Croix following a hearing in July 2019 By. Ernice GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert for the District of the Virgin Islands announced today that Violet Anne Golden, the former chairperson of the Virgin Islands Casino Control Commission, pleaded guilty to theft of government funds and failing to file an income tax return.

According to the plea agreement filed in the case, Ms. 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, Ms. Golden failed to file an income tax return, despite earning an annual salary of \$105,000.

Ms. Golden was remanded to federal custody pending her sentencing hearing, which is scheduled for May 14, 2020.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Office of the Virgin Islands Inspector General, and IRS-Criminal Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Nathan Brooks.

Ms. Golden was originally charged in a 30-count indictment on July 17, along with alleged co-conspirator Stephanie Barnes, alleging the pair conspired to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars in commission funds. She subsequently agreed to a plea deal, which was signed on Dec. 19, where she conceded that the federal government could convict her on counts four and 27 of the 30-count indictment.

According to the original 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 alleged that Ms. Golden, who had an annual salary of \$105,000, failed to file timely tax returns for the 2014 – 2017 tax years.

The case followed a [damning audit](#) made public in Dec. 2018 of the Casino Control Commission by the Office of the Inspector General, which unearthed a flabbergasting array of questionable actions by Ms. Golden, whom the audit alleged ran the operations of the Commission as if she were the sole authority, making major financial transactions with no secondary signatory.