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## **Jailed 'spy' to pay up or face more time**

A Norfolk tax fraudster, who claimed he was a spy in an attempt to cover his tracks, has been ordered to pay £615,000 or face a further five years behind bars.

Raymond Thomas, 73, was jailed for four years and eight months in November 2017, after a HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) investigation found he had stolen £1.6 million.

In an attempt to hide his crime, Thomas told family and friends he was a spy and often worked abroad. In reality, he was travelling to holiday homes funded by his fraud in Berlin, Kefalonia and Perpignan with his wife, Susan

Weston, 70, who helped to launder the money.

Martin Lynagh, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Thomas lived a life of luxury funded by taxpayers, but we put an end to that. Not only has he been jailed, but he will now have to sell assets to repay the stolen money.

“We will continue to pursue those involved in tax fraud and money laundering and urge anyone with information about these types of crimes to report it to us online, or contact our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

On Monday 24 June at Manchester Crown Court, Thomas was ordered to pay back £616,551 and Weston £439,551 within three months. They will receive default prison sentences and if they don't pay Thomas will go to prison for five years and Weston for four years.

Even if a default sentence is served the order for repayment remains and the money is still owed.

### **Notes for editors**

1. Further details can be found here: <http://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/hm-revenue-customs-hmrc/pressreleases/the-spy-who-stole-ps1-dot-6m-tax-2247967>

2. Raymond Edward THOMAS (DOB 17/06/1946) of Tilney All Saints, Kings Lynn, was sentenced to 56 months in prison at Manchester Crown Court on 1 November 2017 having pleaded guilty on 21 July 2017 to:

I. Fraud contrary to section 72 (3a) and (4) of the Value Added Tax Act 1994 through the submission of false VAT returns in order to receive repayments of VAT from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) between 1st of October 2008 and 31st of December 2013.

II. Knowingly producing false invoices to fraudulently reclaim VAT payments from HMRC contrary to the sections 2, 6 and 7 of the Fraud Act 2006.

III. Money laundering contrary to section 327, 328 and 329 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

2. On 24 June 2019 at Manchester Crown Court Thomas was told to pay £616,509.00 within three months or face a further five years imprisonment

3. Susan Patricia WESTON (DOB 06/09/1948) of Kersal Way, Salford, was sentenced to 12 months in prison, suspended for 12 months, at Manchester Crown Court on 1 November 2017. At Manchester Crown Court on 21 July 2017 she pleaded guilty to:

I. Money laundering contrary to section 327, 328 and 329 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 between 7th and 12th of August 2014.

4. On 24 June 2019 at Manchester Crown Court, Weston was ordered to pay £439,551.12 within three months or will she will face a default sentence of four years imprisonment.

5. Anyone with information about people or businesses involved in tax fraud can report it online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business> or call HMRC's Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.

6. Follow HMRC on Twitter @HMRCgovuk

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### **Issued by HM Revenue & Customs Press Office**

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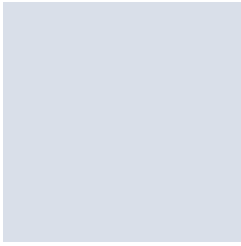
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