



**RICHARD A. BROWN**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
QUEENS COUNTY**  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568  
718-286-6000

Release # 126-2008  
[www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2008

**CONTACT:** KEVIN RYAN  
HELEN PETERSON  
(718) 286-6315

**JFK BAGGAGE HANDLERS CHARGED WITH STEALING \$280,000 IN JEWELRY  
FROM PASSENGER'S SUITCASE EN ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA**

*Face Up to 15 Years In Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that two American Airlines baggage handlers at John F. Kennedy International Airport have been charged with stealing \$280,000 in jewelry from a suitcase that had been checked in and bound for Los Angeles.

District Attorney Brown said, "When air travelers check their luggage with an airline, there is an implicit trust that their bags and their contents will meet them at their destination. In this case, the defendants are accused of betraying that trust and, in the process, of tarnishing the reputation of their employer – American Airlines – and other baggage handlers who faithfully carry out their responsibilities each day."

Port Authority Police Superintendent Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr., said, "Ensuring the safety and security of 110 million annual air travelers is our Number One priority at our airports, and we are vigilant throughout our customers' experience – from parking lots to gates and back again. These baggage handlers are now learning the hard way that criminals at our airports will be thoroughly investigated, arrested and fully prosecuted, without exception."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Angelo Riviello, 38, of 160-40 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Whitestone, Queens, and Albert Acevedo, 47, of 54 Boerum Street in Brooklyn. Both defendants were arraigned on Saturday, August 30, 2008, before Queens Criminal Court Judge Ira Margulis on charges of second-degree grand larceny and third-degree criminal possession of stolen property. Bail was set at \$10,000 for Riviello and \$50,000 for Acevedo. The defendants, who face up to 15 years in prison if convicted, were ordered to return to court on September 30, 2008.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, Riviello was one of several baggage handlers assigned to American Airlines Flight 201 on the morning of August 25, 2008. As baggage was being loaded, Riviello allegedly picked up a bag and threw it into a luggage container while stating, "Wow, that's a heavy bag." Riviello then began adjusting the bag, according to the complaint, while stating, "I think I have a good find," at which point Acevedo, who was the crew chief of the baggage handlers, appeared.

According to the District Attorney, it is further alleged that when Riviello told Acevedo that the bag was heavy, Acevedo unzipped the bag, removed an envelope containing rings from the bag and then

placed several smaller envelopes in his pocket. It is alleged that Acevedo showed another baggage handler three rings while stating, in sum and substance, "I made a good find today. These rings add up to \$1000."

When confronted with the alleged theft, Riviello allegedly admitted that he received five pieces of jewelry from Acevedo and that the jewelry was on his microwave at home. Acevedo allegedly admitted that he did take an envelope containing approximately two or three rings and twenty earrings and that he hid them under a bathroom sink at his residence.

District Attorney Brown said that the defendants were arrested on August 29, 2008, by PAPD police officers at JFK Airport Building 269. The arrest was the result of an investigation initiated when the victim – David Diamond, a licensed jewelry dealer – having disembarked from his flight in Los Angeles, discovered his bag – which contained approximately 925 items of jewelry worth an estimated \$280,000 – missing and reported the theft to the PAPD.

The investigation was conducted by Port Authority Police Department Detective David LeClaire, Detective Sergeant Michael Palermo, Detective Sergeant Joseph McKeever and Detective Lieutenant William Hanley under the supervision of Inspector Michael Guarnieri and the overall supervision of Superintendent of Police Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr.

Assistant District Attorney Catherine C. Kane, Chief of the District Attorney's Airport Investigations Unit, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, and the overall supervision Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

#

**Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).**