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**WESTCHESTER WOMAN CHARGED WITH “MEGALARCENY” GOLD HEIST  
FROM LONG ISLAND CITY MANUFACTURER**

*Allegedly Stole More Than 500 Pounds of Precious Metal from Employer Over Six Year Period*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a longtime employee of one of the country's largest manufacturers and distributors of popular price jewelry has been charged with stealing as much as \$12 million in gold merchandise and material over a nearly six-year period.

District Attorney Brown said, “With gold trading at nearly \$900 an ounce, the defendant is accused of establishing a virtual mining operation in Long Island City which siphoned off millions of dollars' worth of the precious metal from her employer. It is alleged that this once trusted employee carried out her long term scheme by concealing jewelry and raw gold in the lining of her pocketbook. Our investigation is continuing in an effort to determine the extent of her employer's loss.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Teresa Tambunting, 50, of 30 Ogden Road in Scarsdale, New York. She was arraigned yesterday afternoon before Queens Criminal Court Judge Barry Kron on charges of first-degree grand larceny and first-degree criminal possession of stolen property. Tambunting, who was released on \$100,000 bail and ordered to return to court on May 19, 2009, faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Tambunting was employed by Jacmel Jewelry, located at 30-30 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Long Island City, Queens, for approximately 28 years. In 1991, Tambunting was given the position of vault manager. Among her responsibilities was to monitor the vault in which fine gold, finished products and raw materials were stored.

It is alleged that a physical inventory conducted at Jacmel Jewelry in January 2009 revealed that as much as \$12 million worth of merchandise was unaccounted for, and that after an investigation was initiated, Tambunting arrived at Jacmel's offices wheeling a suitcase containing 30 kilos (66 pounds) of fine gold with an estimated value of \$868,000. In statements allegedly made to detectives assigned to the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, Tambunting said that she had taken fine gold over several months during the previous year by concealing it in the lining of her pocketbook, into which she had cut a slit. On February 13, 2009, an additional quantity of gold with a total net weight of 203.55 kilograms (447.8 pounds) was recovered from Tambunting's residence. The thefts are alleged to have occurred between January 1, 2004, and April 28, 2009.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Patrick F. Dolan, of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, under the supervision of Sergeant John W. Kenna and Lieutenant Robert J. Burke, and the overall supervision of Lawrence J. Festa, Chief Investigator, and Albert D. Velardi, Deputy Chief Investigator.

Assistant District Attorney Lauren D. Steele, of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Investigations Division Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

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

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