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**JET BLUE EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH STEALING NYPD SERGEANT'S
LAWFULLY CHECKED GUN FROM LUGGAGE**

Faces Up To 15 Years In Prison If Convicted

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Port Authority Police Superintendent Samuel J. Plumeri, today announced that a Rosedale man who works for Jet Blue at John F. Kennedy Airport has been charged with gun possession for allegedly stealing a 9mm handgun that had been stored in a locked gun box and checked by a police officer before she boarded a flight to Orlando, Florida. The defendant is expected to be arraigned tonight in Queens Criminal Court.

District Attorney Brown said, "It is upsetting that a passenger who buys an airline ticket and lawfully checks her luggage – in this case a secured, legally possessed handgun – has been subjected to having her belongings stolen. This case is, however, especially egregious in that the defendant is alleged to have brazenly stolen a 9mm handgun that had been properly secured by its owner, a sergeant with the New York City Police Department."

Superintendent Plumeri said, "Detective John Reilly and the Port Authority Police Detective Unit at JFK worked diligently to investigate the crime and safely recover the stolen property and return it to its rightful owner. We're pleased at the peaceful outcome."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Tamarcus Hines, 21, of 240-34 Weller Avenue in Rosedale, Queens. The defendant was arrested yesterday and has been charged with second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, fourth-degree grand larceny, fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and fourth-degree criminal mischief. If convicted, the defendant faces up to 15 years in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the criminal complaint, on April 22, 2009, between approximately 8 a.m. and 9:40 a.m., the defendant, who is employed as a baggage handler by Jet Blue, was working at Terminal 5 in John F. Kennedy Airport, when he allegedly broke into a suitcase containing a secured handgun that had been lawfully checked as luggage by an NYPD sergeant before boarding Flight 59 to Orlando, Florida. After breaking into the suitcase, the defendant allegedly broke into a locked gun box inside the suitcase and stole an unloaded 9mm handgun, ammunition and a gun holster.

The District Attorney added that, when the sergeant arrived in Orlando she noticed that her suitcase had been tampered with and that her gun was missing. She alerted authorities in Florida and New York.

An investigation by Port Authority Police Department detectives led to the arrest of the defendant who allegedly admitted taking the gun and later dumping it into a sewer located at the intersection of 150th Avenue and 114th Place in Queens. The gun, ammunition and holster, which had been placed inside of a black gym bag, were later recovered from the sewer.

Port Authority Police Department Detective John Reilly investigated the case, under the supervision of Detective Lieutenant William Hanley and Inspector Anthony Fitzgerald.

The case is being prosecuted by Catherine C. Kane, Chief of the District Attorney's Airport Investigations Unit, of the Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, under the supervision of Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, and Mark L. Katz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Peter A. Crusco, Executive Assistant District Attorney, Investigations Division, and Linda M. Cantoni, Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney.

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

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.