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FLIGHT ATTENDANT PLEADS GUILTY TO CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
IN JFK EMERGENCY CHUTE DEPLOYMENT CASE

Will Enroll In Mental Health Program; Must Reimburse \$10,000 To JetBlue

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that former JetBlue flight attendant Steven Slater who was charged last August with recklessly endangering the lives of JFK Airport ground crews and others by opening a plane's emergency door and deploying the escape chute during a non-emergency, has pleaded guilty to attempted second-degree criminal mischief and will enroll for a minimum of twelve months in the District Attorney's mental health alternative sentencing program.

District Attorney Brown said, "At his last court appearance, the defendant requested to be evaluated for participation in a court-supervised alternative sentencing program to address possible mental health and co-occurring substance or alcohol abuse issues, among others. I believe that the defendant finally has recognized the seriousness of his actions and is willing to accept responsibility. Under the circumstances, today's disposition, which includes reimbursement to JetBlue in the sum of \$10,000, fairly balances the seriousness of the charges against the need for the defendant's rehabilitation."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Steven Slater, 38, of 124 Beach 128th Street in the Rockaway Park section of Queens. Slater appeared today in Queens Mental Health Court before Supreme Court Justice Marcia P. Hirsch and entered a conditional plea of guilty to attempted second-degree criminal mischief, a Class E felony punishable by up to four years in prison, and attempted fourth-degree criminal mischief, a Class B misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail. He was conditionally sentenced to one to three years of incarceration. However, as part of his plea agreement, Slater will enroll in the District Attorney's mental health alternative sentencing program and reimburse JetBlue the sum of \$10,000, which represents the estimated cost of replacing or repairing the escape chute, among other expenses.

The Queens Mental Health Court (QMHC) is a special part of the Queens County Supreme Court. It provides a court-supervised program for those arrested in Queens who have mental health-related issues, who need treatment and other services and who choose to participate in the court program instead of having their cases proceed through the regular court process. The program lasts for at least one year after an individual enters a guilty plea in QMHC.

Each QMHC participant is assigned a case manager who prepares an individualized treatment plan and monitors that individual's participation and progress for the court. The treatment plan may

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include such things as medication, regular appointments with a psychiatrist and participation in an alcohol or substance abuse treatment program.

If the defendant successfully completes the treatment plan prepared for him, he will be allowed to withdraw his guilty plea to the felony charge and will be sentenced to one year' probation on the misdemeanor charge.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges originally filed, Slater was working as a flight attendant on JetBlue Flight 1052 from Pittsburgh to New York on August 9, 2010. When the plane landed at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport and passengers started deplaning and ground crews were working below the plane, Slater created a dangerous condition by intentionally activating the aircraft's emergency escape slide and then using it to exit the plane. The emergency escape slide, which deploys at a force of 3,000 pounds per square inch, could have caused serious physical injury or death if it had struck any of the people working under the aircraft. Slater then walked on the tarmac until he found an unlocked door and exited to the street area.

Assistant District Attorney Benjamin J. Mantell prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, and Mark L. Katz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

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Note to Editors: E-version of press release posted at www.queensda.org.