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**TSA SCREENER AT JFK AIRPORT ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES OF REMOVING \$5,000
IN CASH FROM PASSENGER'S JACKET DURING PRE-BOARDING SCREENING**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a Transportation Security Administration agent assigned to John F. Kennedy International Airport has been charged with grand larceny and other offenses in connection with the alleged theft of \$5,000 in cash from a passenger's jacket as he was going through airport security earlier this week.

District Attorney Brown said, "It is particularly troubling that an individual responsible for ensuring the safety and security of our nation's airlines and protecting us from terrorism would allegedly engage in theft. Such conduct tarnishes the reputation of thousands of dedicated TSA agents who faithfully carry out their responsibilities each day and unfairly undermines public confidence in the TSA's ability to carry out its mission."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Alexandra Schmid, 31, of 383 Sumpter Street in Brooklyn. Schmid, who has been employed by the TSA for approximately four and one-half years, was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Joseph Zayas on a criminal complaint charging her one count of third-degree grand larceny, one count of fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property and one count of official misconduct. Schmid, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted, was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on February 17, 2012.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Schmid was on duty at approximately 8:00 p.m. on February 1, 2012, in JFK's Terminal 4 screening area when passenger Momin Lultan Ahmed placed his jacket in a bin as part of the pre-boarding screening process and placed the bin on an X-ray conveyor belt. When Mr. Ahmed retrieved his suit jacket, he allegedly discovered that five thousand dollars (in one hundred dollar bills, U.S. currency) was missing from his jacket pocket.

District Attorney Brown said that the complaint further charges that another TSA officer had observed Schmid remove the envelope from Mr. Ahmed's jacket pocket and place the envelope inside a blue latex glove. Thereafter, Schmid allegedly left the screening area and went to the restroom. It is alleged that when Schmid was later confronted by Port Authority police, five one-hundred dollar bills were found on her person.

The investigation was conducted by the Port Authority Police Department and by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General.

Assistant District Attorney Carmencita N. Gutierrez, Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney James M. Liander, 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.

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.