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TSA SCREENER AT JFK CHARGED WITH THEFT OF \$7,000 DIAMOND WATCH
If Convicted Defendant Faces Up To Seven Years In Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by the Port Authority's Chief Security Officer Thomas Belfiore, today announced that a 41-year-old Brooklyn woman, previously employed as a Transportation Security Administration ("TSA") screener at Kennedy International Airport, has been charged with grand larceny for stealing a passenger's diamond watch last month.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant was supposed to be screening passengers to ensure the safety of the flying public, but on this particular day this employee allegedly removed a very expensive watch from a plastic bin and kept it for herself. This kind of thievery will not be tolerated at our airports."

"The Port Authority commends our law enforcement partners at the Queens District Attorney's Office and the TSA. The successful conclusion of this investigation would not have been possible without their cooperation. Collectively, we will not tolerate a violation of trust by those expected to protect us," said Port Authority Chief Security Officer Belfiore.

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Margo Grant-Louree, 41, of Montauk Avenue in Brooklyn. The defendant was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Althea Drysdale on a complaint charging her with third-degree grand larceny and official misconduct. The defendant was released on her own recognizance. If convicted, Grant-Louree faces up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, Mr. Bindoo Ahluwalia, a passenger going through the Terminal 7 security checkpoint at Kennedy Airport on August 26, 2015 placed his Diamond Master watch in a plastic bin and proceeded to go through the security screening. Mr. Ahluwalia then walked away - forgetting the round-faced watch that is completely covered with small, white diamonds. Video surveillance of the screening area allegedly shows Grant-Louree, who was assigned to that checkpoint at the time, pick up the watch and then walk away.

According to the criminal complaint, said District Attorney Brown, the defendant allegedly admitted to taking the timepiece and going into the bathroom with it, but when she returned to her post at the security checkpoint, she allegedly stated she became nervous when she saw her co-workers searching for the missing watch. Grant-Louree left the area again and is alleged to have said she then destroyed the watch that is valued at more than \$7,000. The defendant soon afterwards resigned her position with the TSA.

The investigation was conducted by Port Authority Police Detective Daniel Tarpey and Detective French Pearson, under the supervision of Sergeant Boris Perdomo and Detective Lieutenant Jose Alba, under the overall supervision of Captain Hugh Johnson and Chief Matthew Wilson.

Assistant District Attorney Theresa Smith, of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney James M. Liander, Chief of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigation 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 Editor: An e-version of this press release is posted on QDA website at www.queensda.org.