



Department of Justice

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PASSENGER INDICTED FOR ASSAULTING FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Atlanta, GA - DAVID DWAYNE SIDLER, 38, of Kennesaw, Georgia, was indicted by a federal grand jury late yesterday on charges of assaulting an AirTran Airways flight attendant while traveling from Las Vegas to Atlanta earlier this year.

"Airline passengers and flight crews have a right to travel free from violence and intimidation," said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. "When a person frightens fellow passengers by talking about explosives on the airplane and then actually assaults a flight attendant, he will face federal prosecution and prison time."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: SIDLER was on an AirTran Airways flight from Las Vegas, Nevada, to Atlanta, Georgia, on January 21, 2006. SIDLER became increasingly agitated during the flight. SIDLER started talking to the passenger seated next to him about the September 11, 2001, attacks. He then began pacing up and down the airplane aisle. At one point, SIDLER went into a lavatory and became ill, which he claimed was due to taking methamphetamine. When the flight attendant called the captain of the airplane to inform him of SIDLER's behavior, SIDLER grabbed the flight attendant and forcibly took the telephone from her. At that point, SIDLER told the captain to land the airplane immediately because there was a bomb on board. Four Atlanta Police Department officers returning from a narcotics conference in Las Vegas happened to be on the flight. The flight attendant had alerted them earlier to SIDLER's behavior. After witnessing SIDLER assault the flight attendant, the officers converged on him and were able to subdue him after a struggle that lasted several minutes. SIDLER was arrested by the FBI when the airplane landed at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Paul Jones is prosecuting the case.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Gentry Shelnett, Criminal Division Chief, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.