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TSA AND DELTA EMPLOYEES SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ROLES IN A DRUG-SMUGGLING CONSPIRACY AT HARTSFIELD-JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Atlanta, GA - LESLIE ADGAR, 42, of Decatur, Georgia, and JON PATTON, 44, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, were sentenced today by United States Senior District Judge J. Owen Forrester for their involvement in a cocaine and heroin smuggling operation at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport (HJIA). ANDRE MAYS, 24, of Atlanta, was also sentenced for entering a secure airport area in violation of federal screening requirements. PATTON and MAYS were, at the time of the crimes, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees working at HJIA. ADGAR was a Delta Air Lines employee, also assigned to HJIA.

ADGAR was sentenced to 10 years in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. PATTON was sentenced to 10 years in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. MAYS was sentenced to 2 years, 6 months of probation and ordered to perform 160 hours of community service. All three defendants pleaded guilty on June 18, 2008.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Patton and Adgar used their TSA and airline positions to smuggle what they believed to be cocaine and heroin through security at our airport. In return, they each received lengthy prison sentences from the court. These sentences appropriately reflect the seriousness of their conduct and are a reminder that those who attempt to exploit perceived weaknesses in airport security will face federal prosecution and significant penalties."

"We hold our officers to the highest standards and worked aggressively with law enforcement and our federal partners to pursue this case," said David Holmes, Assistant Administrator, TSA Office of Inspection, in Arlington, Virginia. "These individuals in no way reflect the integrity of the thousands of transportation security officers who work to keep the nation's aviation system secure."

Kings County District Attorney (Brooklyn, New York) Charles J. Hynes said, "I'm gratified that our involvement in this case led to a successful outcome. The DEA and TSA deserve credit for their dedication and hard work."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges and other information presented in court: In December 2007, a confidential source ("CS") working for the Drug Enforcement Administration brokered a deal with TSA employee PATTON for the transportation of two kilograms of cocaine through HJIA to New York. PATTON set transportation fees of \$5,000 for the first kilogram of cocaine and \$3,000 for every kilogram thereafter, up to 50 pounds. PATTON later provided the CS with a piece of luggage that was used to carry the two kilograms of cocaine past security.

On December 19, 2007, at the direction of DEA agents, the CS met with PATTON and a second TSA employee, ANDRE MAYS, at HJIA and handed them a carry-on bag packed with two kilograms of fake cocaine and \$4,000. Both PATTON and MAYS were in TSA uniform and on duty at HJIA when they took receipt of the luggage. The \$4,000 was one-half of the total \$8,000 transportation fee; the CS would hand the second \$4,000 to Delta employee ADGAR in New York upon delivery of the sham drugs.

After taking possession of the luggage, PATTON and MAYS entered a bathroom in HJIA's North Terminal with PATTON carrying the CS's piece of luggage. Approximately two minutes later, PATTON was observed inside the bathroom standing outside of a closed bathroom stall talking to MAYS in the stall. PATTON no longer possessed the CS's bag. MAYS was not visible in the bathroom, but the CS's bag was on the floor inside the bathroom stall outside of which PATTON was standing. Approximately two minutes later, PATTON and MAYS exited the bathroom together; PATTON once again was carrying the CS's carry-on bag. MAYS, who had entered the bathroom with his coat open, now had his coat closed. MAYS departed the area.

PATTON then walked around the magnetometers, sending the CS's bag through the x-ray machine. PATTON and the bag were not challenged by TSA screeners. PATTON retrieved the bag and met with ADGAR in the T concourse, providing her with the bag. ADGAR immediately boarded a Delta flight to New York. After arriving at LaGuardia Airport, ADGAR met with the CS who paid ADGAR the remaining \$4,000 of the smuggling fee. Approximately one hour later, ADGAR boarded a Delta flight and returned to Atlanta.

On January 23, 2008, again at the direction of the DEA, the CS traveled to HJIA and provided PATTON with the same carry-on bag that was used in the December deal. This time, however, the bag was packed with one kilogram of fake heroin and \$4,500. PATTON was in uniform and on duty when he took receipt of the luggage.

After taking the bag from the CS, PATTON passed the heroin through the security

checkpoint without notice. He then proceeded to the area around Gate T-8, where he gave ADGAR the bag. ADGAR then boarded a Delta flight bound for LaGuardia Airport. After arriving in New York, ADGAR deplaned and returned the bag with the sham heroin in it to the CS. In exchange, the CS handed ADGAR the remaining \$4,500. Approximately one hour later, ADGAR boarded a Delta flight from New York to Orlando.

A third and final transaction occurred on February 15, 2008. The CS and PATTON negotiated a three-kilogram deal, again from Atlanta to New York. On this date, the CS arrived at HJIA and provided PATTON with the same carry-on bag that had been used in the previous two deals. The bag was packed with three kilograms of fake cocaine and cash. PATTON was again in TSA uniform and on duty at HJIA when he took receipt of the luggage. Subsequently, PATTON passed the fake cocaine through security without incident. Inside the airport, PATTON provided ADGAR with the bag. ADGAR was arrested by DEA agents without incident while attempting to board another Delta flight to LaGuardia Airport. The sham narcotics were also recovered. PATTON and MAYS were arrested shortly thereafter. Further investigation revealed that, while PATTON and ADGAR were attempting to smuggle narcotics through the airport, MAYS believed he was actually carrying money past TSA security.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant United States Attorneys Kurt R. Erskine and Robert C. McBurney prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, 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.