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TSA AND DELTA EMPLOYEES PLEAD GUILTY IN DRUG SMUGGLING STING AT HARTSFIELD JACKSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Atlanta, GA - LESLIE ADGAR, 42, of Decatur, Georgia, ANDRE MAYS, 24, of Atlanta, Georgia, and JON PATTON, 44, of Lawrenceville, Georgia, pleaded guilty today to their involvement in a cocaine and heroin smuggling operation at Hartsfield Jackson International Airport. PATTON and MAYS were, at the time of the conspiracy, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees working at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. ADGAR was a Delta Air Lines employee, also assigned to HJIA.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Strong and effective airport security is a vital component of our national security. The vast majority of TSA, airport, and airline employees are honest citizens who support that critical mission. The investigation and prosecution that resulted in today's guilty pleas demonstrate that we take very seriously any attempts by criminals to undermine that security."

Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division said of the case, "Mr. Mays, Mr. Patton and Ms. Adgar were aggressively investigated for abusing their positions of trust as TSA and Delta employees. Such misconduct undermines the efforts of law enforcement officers who work so hard to keep our airports safe from the dangerous substances that these individuals were attempting to smuggle. These actions will not be tolerated and others attempting to carry out such actions may face federal prosecution as well."

"We were involved with this investigation from the very beginning and cooperated fully with law enforcement and our federal partners to vigorously pursue this case while ensuring that security operations at the airport were never put at risk," said David Holmes, assistant administrator, TSA Office of Inspection. "With zero tolerance for criminal behavior, we aggressively pursue any such activity that may occur in our own ranks."

Tom Barbee, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, said, "The Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General will continue to be committed to working with our law enforcement partners to identify and investigate all allegations of corruption to protect the integrity of DHS personnel, programs, and operations."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges and other information presented in court: In December, 2007, a confidential source working for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) 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 source 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 source was to 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 source'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 source'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 source'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 source'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 source 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 confidential source traveled to Hartsfield-Jackson Airport 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 source, 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 source. In exchange, the source 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 same source and PATTON negotiated a three-kilogram deal, again from Atlanta to New York. On this date, the source arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport 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.

ADGAR and PATTON pleaded to conspiring to distribute cocaine and heroin. Those crimes carry a statutory minimum penalty of ten years in prison and a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. MAYS pleaded to entering a secure airport area in violation of federal screening requirements, a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders. Sentencing for the defendants has been scheduled for September 17, 2008, at 10:30 a.m., before Senior United States District Judge J. Owen Forrester.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, with assistance from Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, Transportation Security Administration, (TSA), the Kings County (New York) District Attorney's Office, the Doraville Police Department, Atlanta Task Force 1 local member agencies: City of Covington Police Department, City of Marietta Police Department, City of Griffin Police Department, City of East Point Police Department, Clayton County Sheriff's Office, City of College Park Police Department, City of Atlanta Police Department; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Delta Airlines Corporate Security, and the DEA/New York Organized Crime Strike Force.

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.