



Department of Justice

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FORMER FLIGHT ATTENDANT SENTENCED ON AIRCRAFT ARSON AND THREAT CONVICTIONS

Court Imposes 22-Year Term of Imprisonment

Rome, GA - TURHAN JAMAR LAMONS, also known as "Jamarius T. Lamons Sledge," 26, of Morrow, Georgia, was sentenced today by Senior United States District Judge Robert L. Vining, Jr., on convictions of charges for Intimidation of a Flight Crew by Use of Fire, Damaging an Aircraft by Fire, Use of Fire in the Commission of a Felony, and Conveyance of False Information Concerning the Destruction of an Aircraft.

"The court has imposed a just and appropriate sentence for the serious crimes committed by this defendant," United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said after the sentencing. "Lamons was a real threat to the safety of civil aviation. The Department of Justice will continue to prosecute with vigor and determination all those whose actions threaten the safety of the flying public."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Gregory Jones stated: "Our office remains dedicated to preserving the integrity and safety of our transportation system and in particular the airline industry, which has suffered from these types of criminal acts. We will continue to respond vigorously to such matters and conduct the needed investigation that enables successful prosecutions as we have just seen in this matter."

LAMONS was sentenced to 22 years, 7 months in prison, to be followed by 5 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution of \$43,703.

The charges against LAMONS arose from two separate incidents involving commercial airlines. According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: On the morning of September 18, 2001, LAMONS, then employed by AirTran Airways, was scheduled to work on Flight 278 from Atlanta to Boston. Using his cellular telephone while on the aircraft at Gate C-12 of the Atlanta Airport, LAMONS telephoned the AirTran agent at Gate C-10 and told her, "All passengers on board Flight 278 are going to die." As a result of the threatening call, the DC-9 aircraft had to be evacuated and searched by the bomb squad, which found no problems with the aircraft.

Flight 278 eventually flew to Boston without incident, using a different aircraft. However, LAMONS refused to work on the flight, claiming he was too scared and upset.

On the evening of May 8, 2003, LAMONS was employed by ComAir Airlines and scheduled to work ComAir Flight 5491 from Atlanta to Huntsville, Alabama. While the aircraft, a Canadair Regional Jet, was in the air en route to Huntsville, LAMONS reported to the Captain that there was smoke of unknown origin in the lavatory. Unbeknownst to the flight crew and passengers, LAMONS himself had set a fire behind a panel underneath the sink in the lavatory. As a result of the fire the aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing at Russell Field in Armuchee, near Rome, Georgia. Firefighters and law-enforcement officers were summoned to the scene. By the time the aircraft landed, LAMONS had extinguished the fire, leaving ashes and water on the floor of the lavatory. Suspicion focused on LAMONS when the Rome Fire Marshal concluded that the fire had been set deliberately and investigation showed that LAMONS was the only person who entered the lavatory during the 20-minute flight.

After the May 2003 incident, the FBI learned of state charges pending against LAMONS as a result of the 2001 threat incident, and the United States Attorney's Office began action to charge LAMONS for both incidents. The two incidents were tried separately. On March 25, 2005, a jury found LAMONS guilty on the charge involving the conveyance of false information concerning destruction of an aircraft in 2001. He was acquitted of a second charge of using his cellular telephone to convey false information about an attempt to kill or injure air passengers by use of fire or explosives. On May 12, 2006, another jury found LAMONS guilty of the three fire-related charges.

This case was investigated by the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, by Detectives of the Atlanta Police Department and Floyd County Police, and by members of the Rome Fire Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Jane Wilcox Swift prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), 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.