



***United States Attorney
District of New Jersey***

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**SUPERVISORY TRANSPORTATION SECURITY OFFICER
AT NEWARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
PLEADS GUILTY TO TAKING BRIBES**

NEWARK, N.J. – A Supervisory Transportation Security Officer employed by the Transportation Security Administration at Newark Liberty International Airport admitted today to accepting bribes and kickbacks from a coworker who stole money regularly from passengers during security screenings, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Michael Arato, 41, of Ewing, N.J., pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Jose L. Linares to an Information charging him with accepting bribes.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

From September 2009 to October 2010, Arato was the Supervisory Transportation Security Officer at the B-3 security checkpoint for Terminal B at Newark Airport. During that time, Arato permitted a subordinate security officer to steal between \$10,000 and \$30,000 in cash from travelers. In exchange, the subordinate officer would “kick up” a portion of the stolen money to Arato. During the three-week period between September 13 and October 5, 2010, video surveillance captured Arato accepting approximately \$3,100 in bribes.

In addition to admitting that he took bribes related to his coworker’s theft, Arato also admitted that he regularly stole from passengers traveling through his checkpoint.

The charge to which Arato pleaded guilty carries a maximum potential penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing is scheduled for May 24, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gregory K. Null for the Northeast Region, and detectives and officers of the Port Authority Police Department of New York and New Jersey, under the direction of Superintendent Michael A. Fedorko, with the investigation leading to today’s guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant United States Attorney Eric Kanefsky of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: John Yauch, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender, Newark

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