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Release # 33-2011
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2011

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**TWO TSA OFFICERS CHARGED WITH STEALING \$40,000
FROM BAGGAGE AT JFK AIRPORT**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Port Authority Superintendent Michael A. Fedorko, today announced that two Transportation Security Administration officers based at John F. Kennedy Airport have been charged with third-degree grand larceny, among other charges, for allegedly removing \$40,000 from a piece of checked baggage.

District Attorney Brown said, "TSA agents hold a position of trust and are supposed to search passengers and their baggage to ensure the safety of the flying public – not to enrich themselves. Passengers must feel secure when they pass through our airports here in Queens County that they are not being targeted by those who would use their position of authority to steal the possessions of others."

Port Authority Police Superintendent Michael Fedorko said, "Despite the coordinated criminal efforts of these two individuals, the Port Authority Police Department, working with the TSA, uncovered their scheme and today arrested the perpetrators. I heartily congratulate our PAPD officers who declared 'checkmate' on these checkers."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Persad Coumar, 44, of 89-50 56th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens, and Davon Webb, 30, of 4393 Barnes Avenue, in the Bronx. The defendants, who are subject to termination as Transportation Security Administration officers, are presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on charges of third-degree grand larceny, third-degree criminal possession of stolen property, fifth-degree conspiracy and official misconduct. If convicted, the defendants face up to seven years in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the criminal complaint, on January 30, 2011, at approximately 7:25 p.m., inside Building 56, JFK International Airport (American Airlines), Coumar is alleged to have X-rayed a piece of baggage and noticed what appeared to be a bag of United States currency inside the baggage. Shortly thereafter, it is alleged, he phoned Webb, who was in a baggage belt area of American Airlines, and told him about the bag with the currency. Webb is alleged to have searched the baggage and marked it with tape, then notified Coumar that there was indeed money in the baggage.

The District Attorney further stated that, according to the criminal complaint, Coumar then swiped an identification card and entered the baggage handling system area, found the bag wrapped in tape, and observed what appeared to be approximately \$170,000 in the bag. He then allegedly took

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some money from the bag and placed it into a box that he took to a nearby bathroom. Coumar and Webb thereafter allegedly met in the bathroom and each took money from the box and hid it in their clothing.

The District Attorney added that, according to the complaint, Port Authority police officers pursuant to court authorization searched Coumar's Jackson Heights home and found \$23,980.00 in U.S. currency and that Coumar told the police that he had taken \$20 to buy food. Finally, it is alleged, Port Authority police officers who searched Webb's residence recovered \$16,000 in U.S. currency.

The matter came to light when another Transportation Security Administration employee notified his supervisor, who reported the matter to the Port Authority Police.

The investigation was conducted by Port Authority Police Officer Thomas Eddings, under the supervision of Lieutenant William Hanley, Inspector Brian Sullivan, and Deputy Chief Anthony Fitzgerald. Transportation Security Administration officials assisted in the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Carmencita N. Gutierrez, Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of James M. Liander, Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Investigations Division Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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