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**D.A. BROWN: VERMONT MAN CHARGED WITH PLANTING FAKE BOMB
IN JFK AIRPORT PARKING LOT AND CAUSING SHUTDOWN OF TERMINALS**

Faces up to Seven Years in Prison

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a 55-year-old man has been charged with disrupting air traffic and causing a panic at John F. Kennedy International Airport yesterday by leaving a knapsack unattended in a public area with a threatening message directed at the FBI scrawled on the bag.

District Attorney Brown said, "Due to the heightened awareness of terrorist activity in this country and especially in this city, the safety of its citizens is a top priority and is taken very seriously. We will not tolerate pranks of any sort that needlessly divert law enforcement personnel from their critical responsibilities and possibly put lives in danger."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Peter Gonick, 55, of 111 Belodeu Road, Island Pond, Vermont. He is being held pending arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on a charge of Placing a False Bomb or Hazardous Substance in a Sports Stadium or Arena, Mass Transportation Facility or Enclosed Shopping Mall. He faces up to seven years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal charges, an unattended knapsack bearing a threatening message was found by authorities last night at approximately 7:00 p.m. between two cars in parking lot one at JFK Airport. As a result, Terminals 1, 2 and 3 were closed and the JFK Air-Train was shut down for approximately five hours. The NYPD Bomb Squad, in responding to the scene and observing X-ray images of the knapsack – which showed what appeared to be possible wires, a metal can and a type of antenna inside – used a water cannon to detonate the bag. Upon detonation, a white powder exploded from the bag.

District Attorney Brown said that the wires inside the bag were not explosive and that there was no bomb inside the bag. The powder substance was analyzed and determined to be flour.

The defendant was arrested by Detective French Pearson of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department under the supervision of Lieutenant William Hanley and Inspectors Anthony Fitzgerald and John Kassimatis when papers allegedly recovered from the bag contained the defendant's name.

Assistant District Attorney Benjamin J. Mantell of the District Attorney's Rackets Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Catherine C. Kane, Chief of the District Attorney's Airport Investigations Unit and Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, and the overall supervision Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

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

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.