



*United States Attorney
District of New Jersey*

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**BERKELEY HEIGHTS MAN CHARGED WITH SEXUALLY ABUSING
SLEEPING WOMAN ON INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT**

NEWARK, N.J. – A Berkeley Heights, New Jersey man is charged with abusive sexual contact for allegedly victimizing a woman aboard a flight from Hong Kong to Newark Liberty International Airport, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Ramesh Advani, 63, was detained upon arrival in Newark on Friday and later arrested by Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”). He is scheduled to appear this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Michael A. Shipp.

According to the Complaint filed in Newark federal court:

Advani was seated next to his victim on the overnight Continental Airlines flight. While the plane was in the air over international waters, the victim fell asleep in her seat with a blanket covering her from her chest to her thighs. While she was asleep, Advani reached his hand under the victim’s blanket and sexually abused her.

Two individuals seated in the row behind Advani and his victim observed the conduct and kicked the victim’s seat in an attempt to alert her. When the victim awoke, she became aware of the abuse and informed the flight’s crew members.

The federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over all sexual abuse cases that occur in American airplanes over international waters, as such events are outside the jurisdiction of any state.

If convicted of the abusive sexual contact charge, Advani faces a maximum potential penalty of three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, the judge to whom the case is assigned would, upon a conviction, consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited the FBI’s Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward; the United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and

Customs Enforcement, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter T. Edge; the United States Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, under the direction of Robert E. Perez, Director of Field Operations, New York; and the Port Authority Police Department, under the direction of Superintendent Michael Fedorko, for the investigation leading to the charge.

The case is being prosecuted by Zach Intrater of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

The charges and allegations contained in the Complaint are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: John Arlia, Esq., New York, NY