



Department of Justice

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AIRLINE PASSENGER ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO SMUGGLE APPROXIMATELY FIVE KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE INTO THE U.S.

ATLANTA, GA - PAULO JORGE DIAS SANTOS, 41, of Lisbon, Portugal, appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Alan Baverman today for a preliminary and detention hearing on charges of importing and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, relating to a smuggling attempt at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. SANTOS was ordered held pending disposition of the case.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "Atlanta is not only a major ground hub for drug trafficking but our busy international airport is also a magnet for those who think they can easily bring drugs into the United States."

"International drug traffickers who think they can use our ports to smuggle their drugs are mistaken," said Brock Nicholson, ICE Homeland Security Investigations Acting Special Agent in Charge in Atlanta. "ICE agents, CBP officers and federal prosecutors are working more closely than ever to ensure that traffickers are stopped and brought to justice."

Customs and Border Protection Director of Operations in Atlanta Robert C. Gomez said, "U.S. Customs and Border Protection is committed to working with federal, state and local agencies to ensure narcotics traffickers are interdicted at our ports of entry and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. This case shows how our cooperative efforts are achieving positive results."

According to United States Attorney Yates, the complaint and other information presented in court: On June 26, 2010, SANTOS, a Portuguese citizen, arrived at Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport on a flight from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Law enforcement officers noticed something about SANTOS' behavior that caused them to investigate further. During a secondary customs inspection, law enforcement officers recovered a total of approximately five kilograms of cocaine that had been concealed inside 11 plastic-wrapped magazine covers in SANTOS's suitcase. SANTOS was to make two more stops in the United States before reaching his final destination in London, England.

The criminal complaint filed in this case charges SANTOS with one count each of importation of cocaine and possession of cocaine with the intent to distribute. The investigation continues into SANTOS and the drugs he was carrying through the airport.

Members of the public are reminded that the complaint contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: www.justthinktwice.com.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Officers of Customs and Border Protection.

Assistant United States Attorney David E. Suchar is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, 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.