



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 11, 2009**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**FORMER JFK CUSTOMS INSPECTOR PLEADS GUILTY
TO CORRUPTION AND DRUG IMPORTATION CHARGES**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that WALTER GOLEMBIOWSKI, formerly a Supervisory Customs and Border Protection Officer at JFK International Airport, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN in Manhattan federal court to charges involving bribery and narcotics importation.

GOLEMBIOWSKI's arrest and prosecution stemmed from a long-term investigation into a network of individuals importing large quantities of hashish, other controlled substances, and other contraband into the United States through John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York ("JFK"). The investigation was conducted by the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force ("OCDESF"), which is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, the NYPD, the United States Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New York State Police, the United States Marshals Service, the United States Secret Service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The investigation has resulted in the indictment and successful prosecution of over twenty individuals, including overseas suppliers and local distributors, as well as the seizure of over 600 pounds of hashish and a significant quantity of narcotics proceeds, in both the United States and France.

According to the Indictment, the previously-filed criminal Complaint, and statements made during today's guilty plea proceeding:

During its investigation, which included wiretaps, video surveillance, and undercover sting operations, OCDESF identified a number of individuals, including GOLEMBIOWSKI, who

assisted in clearing shipments of hashish, other controlled substances, and counterfeit goods through United States Customs at JFK, and who regularly accepted and solicited bribes to permit shipments of contraband to pass without inspection. GOLEMBIOWSKI was captured on multiple occasions, on audio and video, accepting bribes to help co-conspirators bring in illegal drugs and counterfeit goods without detection.

GOLEMBIOWSKI pleaded guilty to Count One of the Indictment, relating to a narcotics importation conspiracy which extended from 2004 to 2008; Count Two, relating to a bribery conspiracy during the same period; and Count Four, relating to a bribery conspiracy connected to an undercover sting operation. Count One of the Indictment carries a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison and a mandatory minimum 5 years in prison, the fine of the greater of \$2 million or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense, and a maximum term of life supervised release. Counts Two and Four of the Indictment each carry a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison, a fine of the greater of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense, and a maximum term of three years' supervised release.

GOLEMBIOWSKI, 66, resides in Bethpage, New York.

Mr. DASSIN praised the investigative work of the OCDESF; the Department of Homeland Security, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility, Investigations East; and the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigation, Philadelphia Field Office.

Assistant United States Attorneys GLEN G. MCGORTY, JEFFREY A. BROWN, and MARGARET GARNETT are in charge of the prosecution.

09-058

###