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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
DISTRICT *of* CONNECTICUT

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FORMER TSA OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL EXTORTION AND  
BRIBERY CHARGES**

David B. Fein, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that BRIGITTE JONES, 49, of the Bronx, N.Y., formerly a Transportation Security Administration officer based at Westchester County Airport in White Plains, N.Y., pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Mark R. Kravitz in New Haven to federal charges related to her acceptance of cash in exchange for facilitating the transportation of illegal narcotics and narcotics trafficking proceeds through airport security without detection. JONES is the third former TSA officer to plead guilty to federal charges stemming from the investigation. A former Westchester County Police officer and former Florida State Trooper also have pleaded guilty.

“This defendant knew that an individual was transporting illegal narcotics and narcotics trafficking proceeds through Westchester Country Airport,” stated U.S. Attorney Fein. “Instead of stopping him, she violated her oath of office, compromised important airport security procedures, and assisted a drug trafficking enterprise. The Justice Department has zero tolerance for corruption within the ranks of those who are entrusted with the responsibility for screening air travelers and their baggage. I commend the DEA Task Force for shutting down a pipeline of highly addictive prescription pills from Florida to Connecticut, and for bringing to justice this defendant and others who participated in this illegal scheme.”

This matter stems from “Operation Blue Coast,” an investigation headed by the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Bridgeport High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force into the large-scale trafficking of oxycodone pills from Florida to Connecticut. The investigation revealed that an individual regularly purchased oxycodone from suppliers in Florida, transported the oxycodone to Connecticut by commercial airline or automobile, and sold the pills to various Connecticut-based narcotics dealers. The narcotics trafficker purchased oxycodone pills in Florida for approximately \$5.00 per pill, and traveled from Florida to Connecticut several times a week carrying up to 8,000 oxycodone pills per trip. He then used drivers to transport him to and from narcotics transactions during which he would sell the pills to Connecticut-based dealers for between \$10.50 and \$13.00 per pill. After exchanging low-denomination currency for larger notes, he transported the proceeds of his oxycodone sales from Connecticut to Florida, either by having a courier drive the money or by using commercial airline flights. The Connecticut-based dealers sold the pills to lower-level dealers and drug customers for between \$23.00 and \$30.00 per pill.

According to court documents and statements made in court, JONES, who was employed as a Transportation Security Agency officer at Westchester County Airport in White Plains, N.Y., was aware that the Florida trafficker was transporting large quantities of oxycodone from Florida, and then transporting the cash proceeds of his sale of oxycodone through Westchester County Airport on his way back to Florida. JONES agreed to allow the Florida narcotics trafficker to transport what she believed were oxycodone pills through Westchester County Airport security and promised that she would help to ensure that he would not be stopped by TSA agents. In exchange, the trafficker paid JONES cash.

On May 19, 2011, the Florida narcotics trafficker, who at this time was cooperating with law enforcement, paid JONES \$200 at a bar in White Plains.

On June 2, 2011, JONES and the Florida trafficker met at a location in Greenwich where they discussed his oxycodone trafficking activity. During this meeting, the Florida trafficker paid JONES \$500.

On June 27, 2011, JONES again met with the Florida trafficker and received another \$500 to help him pass through airport security screening the following day with what he claimed were an excess amount of oxycodone pills that he did not distribute in Connecticut. A recorded conversation at that time captured JONES stating: "Just tell me what time you're coming in. Tell me what flight you're going to be on, what time you're going to be at the airport. When you get to the airport and you're there and you're checking in at the counter, you let me know so when you're coming through security, I'll take care of the rest."

On June 28, 2011, JONES was on duty and, consistent with the prior day's agreement, did not stop the Florida trafficker from passing through Westchester County Airport security while he carried 1,500 pills that she believed to be oxycodone. In fact, the pills were placebos.

JONES was arrested on September 13, 2011.

Today, JONES pleaded guilty to one count of extortion under color of right, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years, and one count of receipt of a bribe by a public official, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 15 years. She is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Kravitz on July 25, 2012.

Twenty individuals have been charged as a result of this investigation. As to the defendants who are awaiting trial, charges are only allegations, and each defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This matter is being investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration's Bridgeport High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force, which includes personnel from the Connecticut State Police and the Bridgeport, Milford, Norwalk, Stamford and Westport Police Departments; the Drug Enforcement Administration in Florida and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General. In addition, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Greenwich, Monroe, Danbury and Waterbury Police Departments have assisted the investigation.

U.S. Attorney Fein also acknowledged the cooperation of the Westchester County Department of Public Safety and the Florida Highway Patrol, and the substantial assistance provided by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida.

This case is being prosecuted in the District of Connecticut by Assistant United States Attorneys Rahul Kale and Tracy Lee Dayton.