

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Contact the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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Florida Man Arrested and Charged with Attempting To Board Aircraft with a Loaded Firearm

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Celebration, Fla., man was arrested and charged today with attempting to board an aircraft at the Atlantic City International Airport with a loaded firearm in his carry-on luggage, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Paul A. Colella, 61, was taken into custody this morning at the Atlantic City International Airport, in Egg Harbor Township, by Transportation Security Officers, with the assistance of New Jersey State Police. New Jersey State Police then notified Special Agents with the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency, who then took over the investigation.

Colella was charged in a one-count criminal Complaint following his arrest and had an initial appearance in federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ann Marie Donio. Magistrate Donio released the defendant on a \$50,000 bond.

The complaint alleges that Colella attempted to board Spirit Airlines Flight #127, which was bound for Orlando, Fla. During the screening process prior to boarding the aircraft, Transportation Security Administration screeners discovered a loaded .25 caliber semiautomatic pistol in the defendant's carry-on luggage.

Despite the charge set forth in the complaint, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

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.

Christie credited Transportation Security Officers of the Department of Homeland Security - Transportation Security Administration, under the direction of Ron Facciatonte, Federal Security Director for Atlantic City International Airport; Special Agents of the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, in Newark; and Troopers with the N.J. State Police stationed at Atlantic City International Airport, under the direction of Colonel Joseph R. Fuentes, Superintendent, with the investigation leading to the criminal complaint.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joshua Drew of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

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