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**FAKE TAXI DRIVER FACES JAIL TIME FOR HUSTLING FARES AT JFK;
ALLEGEDLY TOLD PASSENGERS THAT AIR TRAIN WAS DOWN**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that an unlicensed livery cab driver has been charged with criminal possession of forged documents and other charges for allegedly soliciting fares at John F. Kennedy International Airport on Saturday, March 14, 2015.

District Attorney Brown said, "It is important that travelers visiting New York City are provided with a safe and welcoming atmosphere at our airports. Unregulated taxis and unscrupulous drivers - who are not properly licensed and do not carry appropriate insurance - put riders at risk. The defendant allegedly lied to arriving visitors by stating that the Air Train wasn't running and that he was a Super Shuttle driver."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Barnabas Laurent, 47, of 227 Wiley Street in Brentwood, Long Island. The defendant was arraigned before Queens Criminal Court Judge Frederick C. Arriaga on third-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument, second-degree criminal impersonation, third-degree criminal trespass and unlawful solicitation of ground transportation. The defendant is being held in lieu of \$500 bail and his next court date is March 19, 2015. If convicted, Laurent faces up to a year in jail.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal complaint, the defendant was observed approaching numerous passengers at JFK Airport's arrivals section in Terminal 1. Laurent allegedly told passengers that the Air Train wasn't operating and stated that he was a Super Shuttle driver and offered to take them to the Jamaica Station or elsewhere. Inside the defendant's vehicle, a Super Shuttle rate book as well as receipt books and other material with the Super Shuttle logo were allegedly found.

The investigation was conducted by Police Officer Nicholas Ciancarelli of the Port Authority Police Department.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Catherine C. Kane, Chief of the Airport Investigations Unit of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, and Mark L. Katz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that a criminal complaint is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editor: An e-version of this press release are posted on QDA website at www.queensda.org.