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## **CBP Officers at JFK Seize More Than \$1.2 Million in Jewelry**

12/23/2008

**Jamaica, N.Y.** – On Tuesday, CBP officers at JFK International Airport seized diamonds worth more than \$1.2 million. A 54-year-old U.S. citizen was selected for examination by CBP officers as he arrived on a flight from Tel Aviv.

All passengers are required to complete a written declaration of all goods acquired abroad upon arrival into the U.S. The passenger claimed nothing on his written declaration and confirmed to CBP officers that he had not made any purchases or acquisitions on his trip. Upon examination of his baggage, CBP officers noticed receipts for various diamonds. The passenger became extremely nervous when questioned about the receipts.



Based on his nervous behavior and the discovery of the receipts, CBP officers conducted a pat-down of the passenger which led to the discovery of two sets of diamond earrings and a 20.39 carat emerald cut yellow diamond concealed in his pocket. The passenger claimed that the diamond earrings are worth \$300,000.00 each and the emerald cut diamond is worth \$600,000.00. The total value of all three items is \$1,200,000.00. The jewels were seized under 19 USC 1497, failure to declare, and 19 USC 1595a(c) (1) (A), importation contrary to law. The passenger faces a maximum penalty equal to the domestic value of the undeclared merchandise and forfeiture of the jewels.

Further interview of the passenger revealed that he works in the jewelry industry. The passenger claimed that the earrings were a gift for his wife and that the emerald stone belonged to a friend. He stated that he was bringing the stone to the U.S. to obtain a GIA certificate. Unset stones are generally duty free when imported from most countries; however, a formal entry must be filed on all commercial shipments valued over \$2,500. Commercial shipments are those that are being imported for business purposes.

“CBP is committed to enforcing trade laws at our ports of entry and identifying individuals who brazenly ignore declaration requirements of merchandise,” said Robert E. Perez, director of Field Operations for CBP in New York. “All arriving international passengers should be sure to declare

all merchandise acquired while abroad.”

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

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