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John Brek Arrested: Newark Security Guard Accused Of Making Terrorist Threats Against Obama

VICTOR EPSTEIN | 10/21/09 06:32 PM | 

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NEWARK, N.J. — A private security guard at Newark Liberty International Airport was arrested on charges of threatening Barack Obama the night before the president was to fly there.

A Continental Airlines employee reported overhearing John Brek make threatening comments at an airport coffee cart Tuesday afternoon.

The 55-year-old security guard was arrested several hours later, Port Authority spokesman John Kelly said. He denied making the threats, said Malcolm Wiley, a spokesman for the U.S. Secret Service.

Obama came to New Jersey on Wednesday to campaign for New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine.

Brek allowed police to search his Linden home and officers found 43 firearms, Kelly said. The firearms were still being processed, but no illegal guns had been found.

A message left by The Associated Press at Brek's home Wednesday was not immediately returned. His father, John, told The Star-Ledger of Newark that his son has the guns because he's an avid hunter.

Air Force One landed at the Newark airport shortly before 5 p.m. under tight security. Dozens of Secret Service and Port Authority police officers were visible, and sharpshooters were positioned on roofs of nearby buildings.

"We take every threat very seriously," Wiley said. "We don't have the luxury of ignoring even the allegation of a threat."

Brek is employed by Floral Park, N.Y.-based FJC Security Services Inc., which has a contract with the Port Authority. Its employees screen airport workers to ensure they have proper credentials, Kelly said.

Brek was arrested by Port Authority Police and charged under state law with making terroristic threats against the president. He has not been arrested on federal charges, Wiley said.

Bail has been set at \$100,000 for Brek, who faces five years in prison for the third-degree felony charge, according to Essex County Prosecutor's Office spokesman Paul Loriquet. He said Brek is being held in the Essex County jail and is to be arraigned Thursday.

Patrick J. Conroy, executive vice president of FJC, said the company is working with authorities investigating the alleged threat. Brek has been assigned to the Newark airport for the majority of his six years with the company, Conroy said.

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Associated Press writers Beth DeFalco in Trenton and Philip Elliott in Washington and AP researcher Judith Ausubel in New York City contributed to this report.