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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTINENTAL AIRLINES SUED FOR NEGLIGENCE BY  
FATHER OF KIDNAPPED THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILD  
ILLEGALLY TAKEN BY PLANE TO MEXICO BY EX-WIFE**

**Child Still Missing, Mother Charged with Felony**

**Boston, MA, January 29, 2007 . . .** The father of a still-missing three-year-old girl who was kidnapped by her mother and illegally taken by plane to Mexico in March 2006 filed a lawsuit in Boston federal court today against Continental Airlines for negligence, breach of contract and interference with custodial relations. The child's mother, who remains at large in Mexico, has been charged in the U.S. with a felony kidnapping.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts by the law firm Kreindler & Kreindler LLP on behalf of plaintiff Didier Combe, an American citizen residing in Massachusetts. The suit contends that Continental Airlines, in violation of its own rules, failed to protect the child, Chloe Combe-Rivas, from the criminal actions of her mother, Aline Rivas-Vera, a citizen of Mexico.

**Mexican Law, Continental Regulations Intended to Prevent Child Abduction**

Mexican law requires that a single-parent passenger traveling alone with a minor-age child possess and present a notarized letter from the absent parent authorizing travel for that child out of the United States into Mexico. The lawsuit contends that, in allowing Ms. Rivas-Vera to travel to Mexico with the child without her presenting that authorization, Continental breached its own rules and regulations as stated in the terms of its contract of carriage that the airline makes with its passengers and which are consistent with that Mexican law.

“The laws and regulations applicable in this case are specifically in place to prevent international parental abduction,” said Anthony Tarricone, a law partner at Kreindler & Kreindler's Boston office representing Mr. Combe. “Continental Airlines was the last line of defense to thwart this abduction and protect this child. The airline's own rules

dictate that if a parent attempts to bring a minor child across the Mexican border, that parent must first provide written authorization from the child's other parent, or proof of sole custody. Continental failed its own contractual test, and therefore its legal and moral responsibilities. The airline must be held accountable for the immeasurable hardship suffered by Chloe's father and the irreparable damage Chloe is now suffering as the authorities continue their search for her throughout Mexico."

### **Felony Charges Filed; International Parental Kidnapping Common**

Ms. Rivas-Vera kidnapped Chloe, a U.S. citizen, on March 15, 2006, taking her then-two-year-old daughter on Continental Flight 2547 from Kansas City, MO, to Houston, TX, and continuing on Flight 1524 from Houston to Mexico City without Mr. Combe's consent or permission. At the time of the kidnapping, the married couple was in the process of divorce proceedings. Mr. Combe, now lawfully divorced from Ms. Rivas-Vera, was subsequently granted sole custody of their daughter by court orders in April and July 2006.

In May 2006 the State of Missouri filed Class D felony charges of parental kidnapping against Ms. Rivas-Vera. Federal authorities issued an international kidnapping warrant in June 2006 for the arrest of Ms. Rivas-Vera. Mr. Combe recently relocated to his sister's Massachusetts home from his home in Kansas City, MO, to work full time on the search for his daughter. He is collaborating with the U.S. Department of State to locate Chloe and bring her back to the U.S. Mr. Combe has visited Mexico several times to find his daughter.

"By not following its own stated company guidelines or the relevant international laws in place to protect children, Continental Airlines was complicit and participated in the abduction of my daughter," said Mr. Combe. "The airline had every opportunity to prevent this horrific crime and did not. Continental checkpoints at two U.S. airports for two different flights missed all the signs the airline should have recognized, including a lack of documentation from me authorizing Chloe's travel and not recognizing as a red flag the different last names of my ex-wife and Chloe. This airline failed to protect my little girl."

Mr. Tarricone contends that the border between the U.S. and Mexico is a known corridor for parents abducting children from their custodial parents, and that Continental knew or should have known of the prevalence of international parental kidnapping in this region.

Mr. Tarricone noted that the Terms and Conditions of travel found on Continental's web site (<http://www.covacations.com/terms.aspx>) make clear the company's policy regulating the transport of minors who are traveling to Mexico. It states:

**Minors under 18 years of age traveling to Mexico, Brazil and Chile:** Notarized letter of consent that has a valid period of 30 days and is good for a single entry.

**If traveling unaccompanied:** A notarized letter of permission (originals only) signed by both parents and an individual passport.

**If traveling with only one parent:** A notarized letter of permission (originals only) signed by the other parent.

**In case of deceased or divorced parents:** Legal proof must be submitted to accept only one parent's signature on the notarized letter of permission in order to establish that signing parent has legal custody of the minor.

According to the U.S. State Department (*Trial Magazine*, December 2006), since the late 1970s, "at least 16,000 children were either abducted from the United States or prevented from returning to this country by one of their parents."

"The problem of parental kidnapping is real and substantial, and widely known throughout the airline industry," said Mr. Tarricone. "Tragically, in this case, Continental wasn't watching its own doors."

Anyone with knowledge of Chloe's and/or Ms. Rivas-Vera's whereabouts is encouraged to contact the Kansas City Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at 816-512-8200, or write to [chloekidnap@yahoo.com](mailto:chloekidnap@yahoo.com).

### **About Kreindler & Kreindler LLP**

Founded in 1950, Kreindler & Kreindler LLP ([www.kreindler.com](http://www.kreindler.com)), with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Boston, is nationally recognized as the first and most prominent aviation law firm in the nation. The firm has been lead plaintiff legal counsel in hundreds of aviation cases, including litigation stemming from the September 11 terrorist attacks; the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland; the downing of Korean Airlines Flight 007; and many cases of private, commercial and military crashes. Its ranks include airplane and helicopter pilots, engineers and other technical experts. For more information contact 617-424-9100 or 212-687-8181.

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