



## Flights of Fancy: Apologists for the TSA

Believe it or not, sexual assault has its defenders — and they're not just behind bars for rape or pedophilia. Nor do they exclusively "work" for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the federal bureaucracy that has decreed its sociopaths may "actually [touch] my vagina four times," as Susie Castillo, former Miss USA and recent victim, put it. "[The assailant] went up both legs from behind and then turned around and did it from the front."

(Incredibly, chillingly, the TSA justified this gate-rape just as it did its molestation of six-year-old Anna Drexel and 95-year-old Lena Reppert: "A rep for TSA [says], 'We have reviewed [Ms. Castillo's] screening experience and found that the officer followed proper procedures.'")

No, many of the folks sick enough to plead that groping us protects the Homeland are potential victims themselves. They argue that we protestors have no right to board "their" flight unless they know the brownshirts — sorry; for some reason, I *always* make that mistake — blue-shirted perverts at the checkpoints have molested us.

Many of these passengers also insist that we who object to the TSA would be the first to caterwaul were it *not* pawing us. They frequently present this hypothetical: there are two lines at the airport leading to two different planes. One line passes through the TSA's checkpoint; the other freely boards without any searches or hassles whatsoever. "We all know which jet would be packed and which empty," they triumphantly conclude.

Ironically, they never realize that this is the ideal scenario. Why *shouldn't* this be the case? That way, everyone's happy: those who bizarrely equate sexual assault with safety can moan under a deviant's ministrations all they like while the rest of us waltz onto our flights.

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Indeed, if American aviation operated freely instead of smothering in government's stranglehold, this is precisely the situation that would prevail, with a variety of shades between the two extremes. Just as some of us choose to eat four-star cuisine at hefty prices while others prefer McDonald's, so some passengers would select airlines offering hospitality and convenience while others would settle for nothing less than Gestapo-like security. The rest would opt for some combination of the two: perhaps they'd look for an airline that verified each passenger's identity or one that searched luggage but





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otherwise left its customers in peace.

This solution in which every passenger decides for himself what level of comfort his money will purchase — and who is therefore far happier than when bureaucrats dictate that to him — presupposes the abolition of the TSA. Indeed, it presupposes that governments at all levels, [municipal](#), [state](#) and [federal](#), keep their greedy mitts off aviation. The industry should be as free as any other to offer its patrons exactly what they want, at the prices they want, in all areas: size of seat, meals supplied or brown-bagged, airports that are luxurious and expensive vs. spare and economical, intense security or none at all.

But of course freedom of choice and government cannot co-exist. Ergo, to reach the nirvana in which the service he buys pleases every passenger we must abolish the TSA — as well as the FAA, the DOT and the myriad other bureaucracies controlling transportation.

Americans who are sure we would run the TSA's gauntlet if given the choice harbor other illusions as well — chief among them chronological snobbery. "Everything changed on 9/11," they assert. "These dangerous times demand rigorous security from the TSA." Let's leave aside for a moment what sort of "security" the TSA delivers. Do we truly live in an epoch unlike any other, one whose danger is so extreme Our Rulers must fondle us?

Earlier generations who suffered the imminent risks of raids from Indians, uprisings among slaves, or looting from marauders like Quantrill's Raiders would laugh at such preposterous fears, especially when terrorism's threat is so very remote: we stand a [far greater chance of "legal execution" from our own government](#) than we do of any injury from terrorists.

The hysteria becomes even more absurd when we compare modes of transportation. Americans of the late nineteenth century who boarded trains braved perils that put aviation's to shame: predators such as Frank and Jesse James, Butch Cassidy, and the Reno Brothers frequently hit railroads, plundering, beating, and terrifying passengers. Far from the charming jokers of legend and movies, these thugs were often veterans of the military who were merciless and skilled at killing.

One survivor of an attack by the famed "Hole in the Wall Gang" recalled the horror: "[Following close behind the \[robbers'\] shooting](#) came a terrific explosion, and one of the [train's] doors was completely wrecked and most of the car windows broken. The bandits then threatened to blow up the whole car if we didn't get out. . . [W]e jumped down, and were immediately lined up and searched for weapons. They said it would not do us no good to make trouble, . . . that they had powder enough to blow the whole train off the track." Railroads often chugged through desolate areas stretching for hundreds of miles, so this was potentially lethal.

Could we whisk those Americans from a train in 1899 to a plane in 2011, they would doubtless stand amazed that we have put thugs who assault passengers in charge of "protecting" them — and from the unlikeliest of threats.

Finally, the TSA's apologists claim that if terrorists pulled off another 9/11, Americans would scathingly condemn the Feds. Ergo, we *need* the TSA.

Really? In what crisis have Americans *ever* blamed their great god, government? On 9/11, when the preceding century of unconstitutional meddling in the Middle East finally provoked retaliation, did taxpayers rail at politicians and bureaucrats for their international follies? Or did they jump on the bandwagon those opportunists provided and damn Osama bin Laden?



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Did Americans excoriate the FAA, which mandated and supervised every aspect of the “security” terrorists circumvented that tragic morning, or did they condemn the “private” screeners who followed the federal book to the letter with their unconstitutional and ineffective procedures?

And this year, as the price of gasoline headed for the stratosphere, did drivers castigate [politicians for the taxes they load on every gallon](#) and the [EPA’s regulations that propel costs far higher](#)? Or did [they excoriate the oil companies](#)?

I think it’s safe to say that if the Feds incite another 9/11, they will escape all censure, just as they did the first time. Indeed, pundits and politicians will exploit the tragedy to demand even more money and power for the TSA.

And so will their willing dupes.



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