



Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on July 5, 2011

TSA Debacle: Man Flies Across U.S. With Stolen, Invalid Boarding Passes

June wasn't a good month for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). While Lena Reppert, the 95-year-old wheelchair-bound U.S.-born woman with terminal cancer, was being humiliated into removing her soiled adult diaper by TSA agents in Florida on her final trip home to die, a male with dual Nigerian-American citizenship, Olajide Oluwaseun Noibi (left), was casually frolicking through airport security checkpoints all across America — on stolen boarding passes, with only a University of Michigan ID card, and on flights that didn't correspond to the destinations on the boarding passes.



The first trip on June 24 took Noibi from New York to Los Angeles. Even after a flight attendant with Virgin Airlines Flight 415 noticed, and alerted authorities to, the disparities in responding to an unrelated complaint from passengers, the ["Keystone Kops"](#) in charge didn't bother detaining him. Instead, Noibi sashayed out of the airport and proceeded to try his luck again five days later, on June 29, when he booked a flight from L.A. to Atlanta.

Even then, he was *charged only with being a stowaway!* In a July 1 [Associated Press story](#), reporter Jeff Wilson quoted Los Angeles FBI agent Laura Eimiller as saying that the reason Noibi wasn't immediately arrested after landing in L.A. was that *"beyond traveling without a ticket there was no immediate threat."*

Maybe Noibi should have been wearing a diaper, like Mrs. Reppert — or maybe had a urine bag attached to his thigh, like bladder-cancer survivor Thomas Sawyer, whose [aggressive pat-down](#) by TSA agents last November caused his clothes to be drenched.

All three network newscasts led with the TSA's botched apprehension of Noibi on June 30. It was also covered by several major dailies and wire services. Dribs and drabs emerged until reporters had unraveled what may well be the most audacious and blatant example of double standards ever played out in the name of "security" since the TSA's inception on November 19, 2001.

But falling so close to the July 4 holiday, relatively few people noticed. ABC World News' George Stephanopoulos called the [debacle](#) a "stunning breach of security at one of America's busiest airports." [CBS Evening News'](#) Scott Pelley led his broadcast by saying: "It wasn't one mistake, but failure after failure that has the government plugging holes in US airport security.... This story is infuriating if you've ever fumbled with luggage, a ticket, a boarding pass and an ID while waiting to get through that first [TSA] checkpoint."

[How "infuriating"](#) must it be for the [elderly Mrs. Reppert](#), and for the urine-soaked Mr. Sawyer, and for dozens of other tormented children and adults (including one Alaska state legislator, two toddlers and a



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baby) — none of whom posed any conceivable threat.

NBC Nightly News' Brian Williams rattled off the now-familiar drill every traveler endures, adding: "Tonight the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] is trying to figure out how a man from Nigeria [circumvented] it not once, but twice, in two different cities."

Most of the flying public doesn't need to "figure it out" anymore: Political correctness seems to dictate that dark-skinned males between the ages of 19 and 41 — especially those hailing from Middle Eastern and African nations (already determined as the most likely terror suspects) — warrant only a passing glance, under threat of lawsuits for "discrimination," while light-skinned American women and children, in particular, are harassed and bullied for onlookers' benefit. Harried Americans grit their teeth and put up with the hassle to avoid embarrassment or delay instead of protesting en masse when they observe abusive tactics. A few may even still believe that their "compliance" is important in a post-9/11 world.

On July 1, Andrew Blankstein and Howard Blume provided further insights into the Noibi fiasco in the [Los Angeles Times](#). Apparently, authorities were first alerted to Noibi by the flight crew of Virgin America Flight 415 *two full hours after the plane departed*. Then, fellow passengers complained of the man's body odor and asked to be reseated. That's when a flight attendant asked Noibi for his boarding pass and saw that it was from a different flight and *in someone else's name*. She alerted authorities, while "Noibi went back to sleep" in his cushy, first-class, leather airline seat. But instead of arresting Noibi, politically reliable FBI agents and the TSA allowed him to exit the airport.

In the [New York Times](#), Joseph Goldstein revealed more: The FBI "caught up to" Noibi at LAX on June 29, just as "he was trying to talk a Delta Air Lines agent into letting him get on a flight to Atlanta." But rather than being hauled away as a flight risk for proffering fraudulent papers to a federal agent, he was arrested merely as "a stowaway" — even as authorities were discovering "over 10 boarding passes" in other people's names *inside his luggage*.

In a follow-up piece, Goldstein reported that when Noibi landed in Los Angeles, the FBI interviewed him, did conduct a background check, and examined his luggage. The bureau decided he did not pose an immediate threat and let him go, ostensibly because they knew that Noibi would be traveling on June 29 from a reservation he had made in his name for Atlanta. Except he never actually purchased a ticket! "At 6 a.m. June 29, federal agents were on hand to watch Mr. Noibi try to persuade a Delta employee to let him board the Atlanta-bound flight. The employee rebuffed Mr. Noibi repeatedly, at which point the authorities arrested him...." Yet, according to Noibi's lawyer, they decided the allegations against him were "at the lower end of the continuum of seriousness."

The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#)'s Christopher Seward noted that FBI spokeswoman Eimiller could not confirm "why Noibi was traveling to Atlanta other than to say he may have family [there]."

May have? The elderly Mrs. Reppert *definitely* had family where she was going, but of course a woman who is ill and in her 90s is an easier mark.

They say the classic definition of insanity is "to keep on doing the same things and expecting different results." So, surely the psychologists employed by the TSA for its behavioral detection program (SPOT) must be familiar with it.

SPOT stands for Screening Passengers by Observation Techniques. It works so well that on May 21, 2010, it was reported that at least [16 people](#) later linked to actual terror plots sailed right past the agents! It seems the TSA instituted the program "without first validating the scientific basis for identifying passengers in an airport environment," according to the Government Accounting Office



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(GAO). Even so, BDOs (behavioral detection officers) continue to be deployed to sniff out anger, irritation, and annoyance of people going through airport-screening lines, a scheme reminiscent of both Soviet- and Nazi-style intimidation. Nabbed individuals typically miss their flight and/or are denied boarding.

Outright failures abound: In May 2010, Faisal Shahzad, a native Pakistani who admitted training in bomb-making at a terrorist camp run by militant Islamists, planted a [car bomb in Times Square](#). He was arrested only *after* he had boarded Emirates Flight 202 to Dubai, final destination Islamabad, Pakistan, a notorious hot-spot. Shahzad had been placed on the “No Fly List” earlier in the day, but the airline *didn’t check the list* either when Shahzad made his reservation, when he purchased the ticket, or when he boarded.

On February 26, 2011, a [man slipped passed TSA](#) security screeners at JFK Airport and boarded a plane with three box cutters — discovered only after a flight attendant *saw them fall out of his bag*. The TSA was created as a reaction to the 9/11 attacks, *which began with box-cutters*. Yet, passenger Eusebio D. Peraltalajara, was *not charged with any crime*, even though if a white Anglo is caught carrying so much as a pen knife, it is enough to bring him to grief.

Other [box-cutter](#) incidents include two men already on a flight from Chicago to Amsterdam in August 2010. They were casually questioned after it was discovered that their checked luggage contained *a cell phone taped to a Pepto Bismol bottle, box-cutters, and a knife*.

Typically, it is passengers, not the TSA, who foil true terrorists: In December 2001, Richard Colvin Reid, a.k.a. “the Shoe Bomber,” a proud-of-it member of al-Qaeda, attempted to destroy American Airlines Flight 63 in-flight by detonating explosives hidden in his shoes. The passengers discovered and subdued him, not the TSA, yet air travel has never been the same since.

Infamous [underwear bomber](#) Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, another native Nigerian and open defender of both the Taliban and al-Qaeda, tried to bomb Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009. Again, he was located not by the TSA, but reported *by his own father* a full 35 days before the fact, to two CIA officers at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja. Acting on the report, Abdulmutallab's name was added to the 550,000-name U.S. Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment — a [database](#) of the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center — in November of that year. *But his name never made it to the 4,000-person “No Fly List.”* Even DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano admitted the system “failed miserably.” In a familiar scenario, it was the passengers, again, who apprehended and took him down. They heard popping noises, smelled a foul odor, and saw Abdulmutallab’s trouser leg and the wall of the plane on fire.

As if the TSA’s failures, too long to list here, aren’t enough, it was discovered that its vaunted X-ray body scanners were subjecting people to [10 times the radiation](#) advertised because of a “calculation error” in initial safety studies. The Environmental Protection Agency and Occupational Safety and Health Administration apparently were AWOL.

The TSA’s successes can be counted on fingers, and don’t amount to much even then. [The cost?](#) An estimated \$6,959,791,440.

Soon after 9/11, President George W. Bush told Americans to go about their daily lives as they were accustomed to doing, lest the terrorists believe they had won. Yet, the DHS and its primary appendage, the TSA, have ensured that we cannot do what we once did, thereby convincing terrorists that our way of life is fading into the sunset.



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That the wildly popular [TSA anti-groping bill](#) was allowed to die in the Texas legislature last week — following intense federal government pressure on the legislators — speaks volumes about what we can expect from this disingenuous and “insane” federal agency. Benjamin Franklin had a once-renowned saying (no longer taught in schools), that is, perhaps, apt as Independence Day 2011 passes: “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

Beverly K. Eakman began her career as a teacher in 1968. She left to become a science writer for a NASA contractor, then editor-in-chief of NASA’s newspaper in Houston. She later served as a speechwriter and research-writer for the director of Voice of America and two other federal agencies, including the U.S. Dept. of Justice. She has since penned six books, scores of feature articles and op-eds covering education policy, mental-health, data-trafficking, science, privacy and political strategy. Her e-mail, a detailed bio, speaking appearances and links to her books all can be found on her website: www.BeverlyEakman.com.



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