



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 4, 2011

## Grandma, 84, Strip Searched by TSA, Says U.S. in “Big Trouble”

In a phone interview with *The New American*, the traumatized 103-pound woman, Lenore Zimmerman, warned that America was in “deep trouble” if manhandling frail grandmothers was what “security” had come to. But she plans to seek justice and has already contacted an attorney.



“They stopped me to pat me down and I said ‘I can’t go through the machine because I have a defibrillator,’” Zimmerman explained, clearly distraught at the recollection. “So they patted me down and then they escorted me to a private room and strip-searched me.”

Zimmerman, utterly humiliated, demanded to know why she was being molested, asking the screeners for an explanation. “They’re off their rocker,” she said of the people running TSA, noting that there was no justification for conducting a strip search. “They’re nuts!”

But instead of getting an answer to her question, the abuse intensified, culminating with an agitated Zimmerman banging her leg on a metal walker she had with her. Blood began to flow down her shin and she was bleeding “like a pig,” she said.

The whole ordeal forced Zimmerman to miss her flight to her winter home in Florida after she sought medical attention to deal with the injury in New York. And when she finally arrived, a doctor was forced to give her a tetanus vaccine to prevent further complications. Her next medical appointment related to the wound, she explained, is scheduled for December 5.

“In my wildest dreams I couldn’t have imagined such a thing,” Zimmerman told *The New American*. “I’m going to be 85. I was in a wheelchair with a walker on my lap. If this is what the security is in this country, we’re in big trouble.”

The TSA responded by deploying tax-funded public relations experts to counter the barrage of negative publicity generated by the abuse. A spokesperson for the embattled screening agency essentially [told CBS](#) that Zimmerman asked for it. “Private screening was requested by the passenger, and was granted,” said TSA public-affairs person Kristin Lee, denying that Zimmerman was strip searched.

But according to Zimmerman, a retired receptionist, her pants and even her underwear were pulled down during the ordeal. Outraged at official denials, she suspects the TSA is publicly denying the full extent of the abuse owing to concerns over the looming lawsuit.

Spokespeople for Homeland Security’s transportation apparatus insist there is nothing wrong with the screening process. “TSA screening procedures are conducted in a manner designed to treat all passengers with dignity, respect and courtesy, and that occurred in this instance,” said Lee, presumably



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reading from the same prepared remarks as other spokesmen who were [quoted saying virtually the same thing](#) in separate reports.

News of the scandal quickly went “viral,” grabbing headlines across the globe following a [report](#) in the New York *Daily News*. After the incident, Zimmerman said, her relative’s son-in-law who lives in England had even learned of the abuse she suffered from a television segment.

But her story is only the most recent allegation of TSA brutality and abuse to be picked up by media outlets worldwide. New reports of abuse, molestation, theft, and other improprieties are reported so frequently that they have almost become routine.

In another brewing scandal, airport screeners in Florida are [under fire for detaining a pregnant teenage woman](#) over a purse with an embroidered gun image on the outside. Apparently TSA told her possession of the purse was a “federal offense.”

But even as the supposed security screeners are under increasing fire from the press for harassing grandmothers and pregnant women, Congress has jumped on the bandwagon as well. Big changes could be on the way soon.

The new uproar comes just weeks after a [stinging congressional investigation revealed](#) TSA screening was based on “theatrics” and had failed to catch one single terrorist so far. And despite close to \$60 billion spent on the apparatus since the attacks of September 11, air travel is no safer, according to the report.

The probe described the TSA as “an enormous, inflexible and distracted bureaucracy, more concerned with human resource management and consolidating power” than actual security. And the final report concluded that most of the agency’s functions would be better handled by private companies.

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