

54577

OFFICE DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
 CHIEF BOUNDER COCKETS
 RULED BOOKS
 99 MAY -4 PM 12:01
 1999 APR 20 A 13 01

Date: 4/20/99 4:51 PM
 Sender: 'Da Elf <elf@armory.com>
 To: 9-NPRM-CMTS
 cc: vice.president@whitehouse.gov
 Priority: Normal
 Subject: Your Gore proposal for profiling . . .
 ... is a crock of shit.

Normally I'd be a little more mature about this post but I'm an pretty irate traveler at this point.

After reading a WiReD News Article (I used to work there so...) <http://www.wired.com/news/news/politics/story/19218.html> today it reminded me of the event I'm about to convey to you along with an explanation of Why this is a foul idea.

I was traveling to San Francisco for the wedding of two very close friends. Because of my work I had to wait until the last minute to get things together for it and so I got my ticket that day, and because I'm young (24) I prefer not to own a credit-card because I fear that I wouldn't be responsible with it and the interest would hang me so I paid cash for my Northwest flight.

The plane left Indianapolis with a stop in Detroit, and a connection to San Francisco.

In Detroit, AS I WAS BOARDING THE PLANE I was stopped by two (I will admit that they were very polite) agents explaining that I had been flagged in the computer because of the nature of my travel arrangements [Cash ticket purchase, No rental waiting for me (do you know what they charge a person under 25?, and like I need one to get around San Francisco - BART, MUNI, my other best-friend's car I can borrow, etc.) and I didn't have a hotel reservation (duh, after 15 years in California I think I can come up with a friend or two that would loan me a couch for the evening and all my friends want to loan me their kitchens as I'm a pretty good cook for a computer geek), and I was flying with a one-way ticket (after the wedding I was going to get a flight to visit some old friends in Los Angeles and I was going to fly back to Indianapolis from there so Round-Trip was not going to work for me. Essentially, I'd been profiled as a risk by your little system and as you can see from above there are very good reasons for the way I was traveling.

The agent (still very polite) explained (and I remember very clearly) that "the system flagged you as a security risk" and that they would like to search my bags.

Frankly, I understand the need for security in that mode of travel, and I understand that entering past the metal-detectors constitutes my agreement to be searched at random if an agent would like to. In fact, as a Computer/Network Security consultant I understand much more than you would think. But, what pisses me off is that I was 15 feet from the fuselage of my plane and right there as people passed by to board the agents are spreading my underwear along the ground. It's embarrassing. Believe it or not I would have preferred being taken to a slightly more private place for that (I was seeing a friend in LA like I said so I had some skimpy undergarments, what can I say? other than I was not pleased as folks stared when one of the agents held them up). I was interrogated riht there, my computer gear (ThinkPad 600, Jazz, networking cables and adapters, CD and Disk Media, etc.) being of High suspicion. Now I'd turned the damned thing on for the (also very nice) people at X-Ray, powered most of my gear to show it was an operable machine and not a bomb (which I'm very happy to do) but because I was carrying about \$10k - worth of gear I was given a "look" by the agent that clearly conveyed to me that (this was the rude agent) he thought I was full-of-shit having explained WHY I need this gear. [Yeah, I have long-hair, most Geek-kids like me do, and yeah I was in jeans and a flannel instead of my usual slacks and button-up for work but I was traveling for p'easeure and not business so why the hell shouldn't I be comfortable? . . . but just because I'm young and looked like a slob does NOT mean that I'm not a trained professional with a career in High-End networking and computing environments.] Frankly I resented that "look".

But moreover I resented being profiled and having my stuff pulled right there on the boarding platform because of some stupid algorithm . . . that obviously does not work.

I let it slide.

But then flying to Sacramento for my Girlfriend's birthday, the same crap happened in St. Paul. Almost exactly the same circumstances and actions went down so I'll sare you the text.

The little formula keeps flagging me as a "Security Risk" and I'm getting to the point where I'm starting to resent it and considering legal action if it happens again. It's an invasion of my privacy, embarrassing as all hell spending a flight with people around me wondering what I did wrong and (as people with no lives of their own are want to do...chattering through the flight about it), and I'm being made to feel like a criminal.

I'm neither a criminal nor a terrorist but because of my lifestyle and the way

I like to do things your system seems to think I am. I work hard, I'm intelligent, I'm polite and curious, friendly, and never a nuisance when I travel. I'm respectful to the folks that work in the airports (in part because

I know other travelers give them grief) and generally a "good citizen" so you'll forgive me if this profiling pisses me off.

I have some thoughts on this matter :

If, when I travel, as you impliment this system in other airlines I continue to get flagged, I will round up others like me using my presence on The Net (I was here long before you were Al) and file suit.

Being a computer professional I think I'm pretty familliar with algorithms that do similar things and I think I can safely say that yours needs some more work.

Nice try but I'll wait for Version 2.0, dig?

Also, when going through passenger's things, privacy is an issue...other travelers are not privy to my undies, if they were my travel-bag would be clear-plastic... it's green canvas/nylon for a reason folks ; when I see my girlfriend and have my taudry-underthings, well...they're for her, not Granny flying to see the kids in LA. (BTW ; *I* got shit from a passenger about my choice of undergarments because she was with her daughter of like 14 . . . not the agents...noooooooo, THEY didn't get hassled by this woman for bringing my undies out, no, she bitched at ME. She should never seen my undies, thank-you-very-much. Al, you talk about privacy through both sides of your mouth . . . if you're going to say it's important to you, I'd like to see you actually do something to help me believe you. But I suppose that really is too much to ask of a politician in your situation isn't it?

So, in closing ; fix it . . . now would be nice, I'm up for a trip to Canada in August and Cal next month when I move back. I have many years of travel ahead of me and I won't put up with this much longer.

Thank-you for hearing me out.

(To the poor FAA person and VP Aide that actually has to read this, please, I don't want you to feel as though I'm attacking you though this is written in that format. Please accept my sincere apologies.)

Eric Theodore Kellogg
2518 Fox Harbour Court
Indianapolis, IN 46227
317.780.7014
888.753.9409

EK - 'Da Elf
I'm a frustrated genius, sir.



RFC822 TXT