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Specializing in information not retrievable from other sources

VIPS, AIRPORTS & INADVERTENT GUN SMUGGLING [A SAMPLING OF CASES]

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	COUNCILMAN CAUGHT WITH GUN AT AIRPORT	2
2.	DOCTOR CAUGHT WITH .38 IN BRIEFCASE	2
3.	STATE TREASURER CAUGHT WITH HANDGUN	3
4.	FAMOUS CHEF HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON	3
5.	GRAMMY-WINNING SINGER CAUGHT WITH GUN	3
6.	.44-CALIBER IN MEDIA EXECUTIVE'S BAG	4
7.	HANDGUN IN JUDGE'S CARRY-ON BAG	4
8.	ROSS PEROT JR. HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON	
9.	MOTLEY CRUE DRUMMER HAD GUN AT LAX	5
10.	UNIVERSITY BAND LEADER HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON	5
11.	DEMOCRATIC LAWMAKER HAD GUN IN BAGGAGE	
12.	YANKEE PITCHER PACKED .357	6
13.	BOY SCOUT OFFICIAL PACKED HANDGUN	6
14.	DALLAS COWBOYS COACH STOPPED WITH GUN IN BAG	
15.	MILLIONAIRE CONCEALED FLARE GUN, KNIFE	7
16.	JUDGE CONCEALED HANDGUN IN HER PURSE	8
17.	ELDERLY MAN TAKES GUN THROUGH CHECKPOINT	
18.	BUSINESSMAN PACKED .38 IN BRIEFCASE	
19.	TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CONSULTANT ARRESTED	9
20.	STATE REPRESENTATIVE HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON	10
21.	POLICE CHIEF FAILED TO DECLARE HANDGUN	
22.	ARMED PASSENGER ARRESTED AT CHECKPOINT	
23.	PASSENGER FORGOT HE HAD THREE GUNS IN BAG	11

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24.	SON OF PLAYBOY INC. ATTORNEY STOPPED WITH GUN	11
25.	COMEDIAN ARRESTED WITH GUN IN BRIEFCASE	11
26.	AIRPORT SECURITY CHIEF CAUGHT WITH BULLETS	12
27.	FLIGHT ATTENDANT HAD GUN ON UNITED AIRLINES	12

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VIPS, AIRPORTS & INADVERTENT GUN SMUGGLING [A SAMPLING OF CASES]

INTRODUCTION

On March 30, 2007, a highly respected flight attendant was arrested at Dulles International Airport for carrying a concealed handgun aboard United Flight 7591, which had originated at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Upon landing at Dulles, the 45-year-old uniformed flight attendant discovered she had inadvertently stashed the weapon inside carry-on luggage and, to her credit, voluntarily confessed her error to the proper authorities.

Although hundreds of handguns are *intentionally* concealed and illegally carried into U.S. airports each year – by common criminals, disloyal employees and ill-advised or deranged citizens – one unique group of offenders is often overlooked; otherwise honest and law-abiding citizens who *unintentionally* carry firearms through security checkpoints.

Unbeknownst to the embarrassed flight attendant, but perhaps of some consolation, is the fact that hundreds of everyday citizens have suffered similar inexcusable surprises with handguns. And while many inadvertent gun smugglers have histories of inexplicable behavior, the lengthy list of offenders includes scores of politicians, judges, entertainers, business executives, sports figures and other professionals and celebrities "who should have known better."

Individually and collectively, hundreds of inadvertent gun smugglers, from 1980 to 2007, have unwittingly revealed serious flaws in checkpoint security, criminal profiling and so-called "trusted fliers" programs that allegedly identify travelers who pose less risk.

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COUNCILMAN CAUGHT WITH GUN AT AIRPORT [HARTSFIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

MARCH 6, 1988

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Atlanta councilman, Hosea Williams, a well-known human rights activist, was stopped at Hartsfield International Airport and charged with carrying a concealed .38-caliber handgun without a license. Williams reported that he forgot to leave the revolver at home. He faced a fine of up to \$1,000.

DOCTOR CAUGHT WITH .38 IN BRIEFCASE [WASHINGTON DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

JUNE 22, 1989

LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Dr. Eric Foretich, a highly publicized oral surgeon, was detained at Washington Dulles International Airport as he attempted to pass a security checkpoint with a loaded .38-caliber semiautomatic handgun in his briefcase.

Dr. Foretich was locked in a bitter, nationally publicized custody dispute with his former wife, Dr. Elizabeth Morgan, who was being held in the D.C. Detention Facility on contempt-of-court charges. Dr. Morgan refused to tell Judge Herbert Dixon where the couple's 7-year-old daughter, Hilary, was living. She claimed her former husband sexually abused the girl, but Dr. Foretich has steadfastly denied the charge.

When Dr. Foretich was detained for carrying the handgun, he was en route to a Pittsburgh television station to appear on a talk show. Dr. Morgan also appeared on the show through a telephone hookup from the jail.

Dr. Foretich explained that he purchased the handgun for protection after receiving death threats related to the custody fight. He was also assaulted in the parking lot of his medical office in 1987. He said he had forgotten that the weapon was in his briefcase and passed a polygraph test.

On September 13, 1989, Dr. Foretich pleaded no contest to the misdemeanor charge of carrying a deadly weapon into an airport and was fined \$800 and placed on six months probation. He could have received up to 12 months imprisonment and \$1,000 in fines.

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STATE TREASURER CAUGHT WITH HANDGUN [LAMBERT AIRPORT]

NOVEMBER 14, 1991

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Wendell Bailey, Missouri's state treasurer, was stopped from boarding a plane at Lambert Airport when a loaded 9mm handgun was discovered in his carry-on bag. Bailey explained that in his rush to catch a flight he forgot that the handgun was in his travel bag. The weapon was detected at a security checkpoint when the carry-on bag passed through a metal detector.

FAMOUS CHEF HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON [BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

SEPTEMBER 15, 1992

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

World famous Cajun chef Paul E. Prudhomme, 52, was arrested at Baltimore-Washington International Airport when a private security guard discovered a loaded, five-shot, .22-caliber revolver in his carry-on bag. The weapon was detected as it passed through an X-ray machine at Pier B, which serves Delta Airlines and America West.

Prudhomme, who was in Baltimore to help prepare a \$200-a-plate fundraiser for preserving the Chesapeake Bay, was charged with possession of a handgun and attempting to carry a firearm onto a plane, which is a felony. The weapon was properly registered in Louisiana but not in Maryland.

In a telephone interview with *The Sun* newspaper, the famous chef explained that he maintains two briefcases at his New Orleans home; one for traveling and one for his handguns.

Before departing, Prudhomme removed a number of other weapons from the handgun satchel, because it contained some materials he wanted to read, but forgot about the .22-caliber revolver concealed in a side pocket. Prudhomme was released on a \$1,000 unsecured bond and allowed to catch a later flight home.

GRAMMY-WINNING SINGER CAUGHT WITH GUN [KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

DECEMBER 27, 1992

NEW YORK

Grammy-winning singer Harry Connick Jr. was arrested at a Kennedy International Airport checkpoint when security guards discovered an unlicensed, unloaded 9mm semiautomatic handgun in his carry-on bag.

Authorities say the weapon was discovered when Connick voluntarily admitted he had the handgun with him. The handgun, which Connick says was a gift, was discovered shortly before the crooner boarded a TWA flight to his home in New Orleans.

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Charged with fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon (a misdemeanor), Connick spent the night in a New York jail and was released facing a possible (but unlikely) maximum sentence of a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

.44-CALIBER IN MEDIA EXECUTIVE'S BAG [MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

FEBRUARY 17, 1993

MIAMI, FLORIDA

Miami Herald executive, Mack Quintana, 43, was charged with carrying a loaded .44-caliber weapon at Miami International Airport after the weapon was discovered in his carry-on bag. He was released on \$5,000 bond.

Quintana, the *Herald's* vice president for advertising, told one of his reporters that the gun, which he purchased for home protection, had been stored in his luggage at home for safekeeping and he had forgotten about it when he packed for a business trip. The gun was reportedly registered, but Quintana did not have a permit to carry it in public.

The powerful weapon was discovered by a security guard when it went through a metal detector. The incident occurred at 11:55 a.m. at concourse D.

HANDGUN IN JUDGE'S CARRY-ON BAG [HOBBY AIRPORT]

NOVEMBER 10, 1993

HOUSTON, TEXAS

District Judge Dan Downey was stopped by security at Hobby Airport after a handgun in his on-flight bag set off a metal detector. The judge called District Attorney John B. Holmes Jr. who instructed the arresting officer to confiscate the gun for evidence and to allow Judge Downey to catch his flight because he didn't pose a flight risk.

Holmes reported there was a question in state law about whether a judge is considered a peace officer and allowed, therefore, to legally carry a firearm into an airport.

Carrying a firearm into a secure area of an airport is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by fines not to exceed \$3,000 and up to one year in jail.

Three rather old appeals court cases supported the position that a judge is a peace officer but a 1989 opinion by former Attorney General Jim Mattox concluded that judges were not peace officers.

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ROSS PEROT JR. HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON [SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

NOVEMBER 17, 1993

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

H. Ross Perot Jr., son of the Texas billionaire and former presidential candidate, was acquitted on this date of carrying a loaded .380-caliber handgun through a checkpoint at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. It took a jury 50 minutes to reach a verdict.

Perot testified that he kept the weapon in his office because of threats to him and his family. He reported that in May 1993 he put the weapon in a carry-on bag so that he could take it home and clean it. When he grabbed the same bag for a business trip he forgot that it contained the handgun.

The jury foreman said the panel of six concluded that a "prudent man" would not knowingly carry a weapon through a checkpoint. Perot Jr. faced a penalty of up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

MOTLEY CRUE DRUMMER HAD GUN AT LAX [LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

MARCH 3, 1994

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee, on this date, was sentenced to one year probation for carrying a loaded semiautomatic handgun with hollow-point ammunition into Los Angeles International Airport in November 1993. A security guard spotted the handgun in Lee's carry-on luggage. Lee faced up to 18 months in prison and a \$2,000 fine but received only probation, a \$200 fine and \$340 in penalties.

UNIVERSITY BAND LEADER HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON [ROBERT MUELLER MUNICIPAL AIRPORT]

SEPTEMBER 2, 1994

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Airport police found a .22-caliber handgun inside a carry-on bag belonging to University of Texas band director Glenn Richter when he passed through security screening at Robert Mueller Municipal Airport. Richter was trying to catch a flight to Pittsburgh for a football game against the University of Pittsburgh.

Richter explained that in his haste to pack he picked one of two duffel bags that already had clothes in it. Unfortunately, the bag also contained a handgun he had taken on a recent hunting trip. He was released on personal recognizance. The band traveled to the season opener without its director.

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DEMOCRATIC LAWMAKER HAD GUN IN BAGGAGE [WASHINGTON NATIONAL AIRPORT]

DECEMBER 1, 1994

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Rep. Maurice Hinchey of New York was charged with carrying a loaded handgun in his baggage at Washington National Airport as he attempted to catch a flight back to New York. The Democratic lawmaker explained that the handgun was inadvertently left in a piece of luggage he took from his upstate New York home when he drove to Washington for the late November Congressional session. The gun remained in the unopened luggage until December 1, 1994, when it was discovered by airport security.

On January 5, 1995, Rep. Hinchey pleaded no contest to the charge of carrying a loaded handgun and was given a suspended sentence by District Judge Joseph Gwaltney. The sentence was to be suspended and lifted automatically in a year.

YANKEE PITCHER PACKED .357 [KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

NOVEMBER 7, 1996

QUEENS, NEW YORK

Former Yankee pitcher Steve Howe was sentenced to perform 150 hours of community service on this date for carrying an illegal, loaded .357-Magnum handgun through Kennedy Airport in June 1996.

The 38-year-old pitcher was arrested as he and his wife, Cindy, were about to board a Delta Air Line flight to their Montana home. The unlicensed weapon was found in his luggage at JFK two days after the Yankees released him in mid-season for poor performance.

In 1991, Howe was arrested on cocaine charges. Noting Howe's personal battles with drugs, the court ordered Howe to perform his community service by reaching out to New Yorkers battling the same problems.

BOY SCOUT OFFICIAL PACKED HANDGUN [MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

APRIL 27, 1997

MIAMI, FLORIDA

The 59-year-old chief executive of the Boy Scouts of America was arrested Sunday at Miami International Airport after an X-ray scan revealed a loaded .32-caliber revolver in his carry-on bag. Jere B. Ratcliffe was charged with carrying a concealed weapon, a felony, and was released after posting \$5,000 bond. Ratcliffe explained that he had been traveling to his rural cabin and had forgotten that he had the gun in his bag.

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DALLAS COWBOYS COACH STOPPED WITH GUN IN BAG [DALLAS-FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

AUGUST 4, 1997

DALLAS, TEXAS

Dallas Cowboys coach Barry Switzer was arrested after a loaded .38-caliber revolver was discovered in his carry-on baggage at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. Two days later team owner Jerry Jones fined the NFL coach \$75,000 for the incident. Switzer was not licensed to carry the gun.

Switzer explained that he had inadvertently left the weapon in his travel bag after putting it there with the intention of keeping it away from three young children who were guests at his home over the weekend. His son, Doug, had been in his Dallas area home and left the gun on his bed. Switzer said he was alarmed to find the gun out – with children ages 2, 10 and 11 in the house – and put the weapon in his travel bag with the intention of hiding it in his closet to keep it out of the hands of the children.

On the way to the closet, Switzer got distracted with a telephone call and forgot about the gun. Switzer rushed to the airport, put his bag through screening and suddenly noticed two police officers at his side.

Carrying a handgun in Texas without a permit is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$4,000 fine. Carrying a weapon into an airport is a third-degree felony, punishable by two to 10 years in prison and fines up to \$10,000.

The timing of Switzer's arrest couldn't have been worse. The Dallas Cowboys had recently suffered many embarrassing incidents off the field and owner Jones had put players on notice that illegal activities would not be tolerated.

The NFL gun policy, endorsed by the NFL Players Association, prohibits employees from possessing a weapon while traveling on League-related business or while they are in an NFL facility.

Switzer stated in a news conference, "I am embarrassed for Jerry Jones and the Cowboys organization for an innocent, honest mistake that I made."

[NOTE: Airport spokeswoman Angel Biasatti, quoted by the Associated Press, reported that 38 handguns had been confiscated at the airport in the first eight months of 1997.]

MILLIONAIRE CONCEALED FLARE GUN, KNIFE [PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

AUGUST 11, 1998

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

John "Jack" Kieser, a millionaire real estate investor from Florida, was arrested after boarding an Orlando-bound U.S. Airways flight at Philadelphia International Airport. An off-duty flight attendant told airline gate officials that she overheard Kieser use the word "hijack" and mention "scoping out" the Philadelphia and Orlando airports. Security officials searched Kieser's carry-on gym bag and discovered a loaded flare gun, marine flares and an 8-inch knife.

On August 7, 1998, Kieser was sentenced to eight months in prison and fined \$10,000. He was ordered to undergo drug, alcohol and psychological counseling during three years of supervised release following his prison term.

Kieser testified that the flight attendant overheard his companion greet him with the words "Hi, Jack" and that he did not believe the flare gun or knife qualified as dangerous weapons under federal law.

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Police records show that Kieser had a history of reckless behavior that included 22 traffic violations over the past 10 years. One had occurred a year earlier while he was awaiting trial and resulted in temporary suspension of his drivers license.

Kieser showed the jury a home video in which he shot himself repeatedly with a flare gun to prove it harmless. The video won Kieser an appearance on the television show "Hard Copy" – and a reproach from Judge William Yohn, who called it evidence of a recklessness that needed to by punished by prison. Judge Yohn said Kieser endangered himself and the 12-year-old nephew he recruited as his cameraman.

JUDGE CONCEALED HANDGUN IN HER PURSE [SAN ANTONIO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

SEPTEMBER 14, 1998

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

County Court-at-Law Judge Shay Gebhardt was charged with carrying a handgun through a security checkpoint at San Antonio International Airport.

Airport officials said the 51-year-old judge had the weapon in her purse. Gebhardt told television station KTSA that she had recently obtained the gun because of death threats against her. A court date was scheduled for October 1998.

ELDERLY MAN TAKES GUN THROUGH CHECKPOINT [LOUIS ARMSTRONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

OCTOBER 23, 2001

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

An unidentified 68-year-old man passed through a security checkpoint at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, boarded a Southwest Airlines flight and was halfway to Phoenix when he discovered a derringer in his briefcase.

Startled to find the handgun he thought he had lost, the embarrassed man summoned the flight crew and explained he had inadvertently carried the weapon aboard the aircraft.

The derringer and locked briefcase were stored in the cockpit with the pilots, who radioed ahead and alerted security personnel at Phoenix airport.

Satisfied that the man made an honest mistake and was not a terrorist, FBI agents allowed him to purchase a lockbox at the airport and check it into the cargo hold for the remainder of his trip.

The blame for the inadvertent security breach was placed on one employee with International Total Services Inc. [ITS], the security contractor for Southwest Airlines.

ITS, which filed for bankruptcy protection two days after the September 11 suicide attacks, fired the employee who failed to find the derringer at the checkpoint.

[NOTE: Three weeks before this incident, September 2001, a 63-year-old man passed through a checkpoint at Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport with a .22-caliber handgun in his pocket. Realizing his error before boarding, the man alerted officials with Delta Air Lines. The security breach was blamed on a faulty metal detector. On May 6, 2002, a man carried two loaded handguns through a security checkpoint at Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans, but was arrested before he could board a flight

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to Los Angeles, thanks to a random search at the gate. Unlike the October 23, 2001, incident at Louis Armstrong International, this passenger is believed to have intentionally breached security.]

BUSINESSMAN PACKED .38 IN BRIEFCASE [EPPLEY AIRFIELD]

NOVEMBER 10, 2001

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Douglas E. Miller, a 65-year-old Colorado businessman, was arrested when he tried to board a flight at Omaha's Eppley Airfield with a .38-caliber revolver concealed in his briefcase. Miller explained that he started carrying the weapon a year earlier after being harassed while changing a tire. Security workers found the weapon buried beneath paperwork in Miller's briefcase. On January 15, 2002, a federal jury acquitted Miller after deliberating for just 15 minutes.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CONSULTANT ARRESTED [MEMPHIS AIRPORT]

DECEMBER 28, 2001

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Barry Brunstein, 55, owner of Transport Security Consultants Nationwide in Brandon, Florida, was charged with trying to board an aircraft in Memphis, Tennessee, carrying a concealed weapon. Security guards conducting a random search in Memphis found the handgun in Brunstein's briefcase. In the mid-1970s Brunstein was employed as a U.S. Department of Transportation safety officer.

Brunstein was making a round trip from Tampa to Memphis and back to Tampa in order to complete requirements for a Delta Air Lines frequent-flier program for miles traveled. His plan was to arrive in Memphis and immediately return to Tampa so he could qualify for the travel award. But Memphis police found the handgun in his briefcase and took him into custody. Brunstein was allowed to return to his home in Valrico, Florida, the next day on another airline because he was not allowed to fly on Delta.

Security screeners at the airport in Tampa did not see the gun in Brunstein's briefcase. And since he stayed in the gate area when his flight connected in Atlanta, he did not have to go through the screening in that city.

Brunstein explained that he had the weapon in his car earlier in the month when he traveled to Orlando on business. When he checked into a hotel, he removed the handgun from the car and put it in his briefcase, went home to Valrico and set the briefcase aside until he took it on his Memphis trip.

The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* reported that Brunstein was concerned that the incident would affect his credibility as a transportation safety consultant, a business that is based on credibility. Brunstein has testified in court as an expert on truck and bus safety.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE HAD GUN IN CARRY-ON [MANCHESTER AIRPORT]

JULY 2003

NEW HAMPSHIRE

When federal screeners discovered a gun in the luggage of State Representative Howard Dickinson at Manchester Airport, he explained that he did not realize the gun was in his carry-on bag.

Dickinson, who has a state permit to carry a concealed weapon, faces a possible fine but no criminal charges.

Authorities told the media that this was the first time a passenger was caught with a handgun since federal screeners took over security at Manchester Airport in September 2002.

POLICE CHIEF FAILED TO DECLARE HANDGUN [DETROIT METROPOLITAN AIRPORT]

OCTOBER 2003

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The United States Transportation Security Administration fined Chief Jerry Oliver of the Detroit Police Department \$300 for failing to declare a loaded handgun that was discovered in his luggage at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Chief Oliver explained he did not realize he was required to declare the weapon.

The incident prompted a storm of controversy and Chief Oliver resigned his position two weeks later.

ARMED PASSENGER ARRESTED AT CHECKPOINT [FORT LAUDERDALE-HOLLYWOOD AIRPORT]

JANUARY 13, 2005

FLORIDA

Gerard Grasso, 45, of Elmira, New York, was arrested at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport for concealing a loaded .25-caliber handgun in his carry-on bag. Grasso told police he forgot the weapon had been placed in the front zipper compartment of the travel bag.

A security screener stopped Grasso after the bag passed through an X-ray monitor. Grasso was arrested by Broward Sheriff's Office deputies, charged with carrying a concealed firearm – and released from the county jail after posting a \$1,000 bond.

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PASSENGER FORGOT HE HAD THREE GUNS IN BAG [PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

SEPTEMBER 2, 2005

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Larry Bland, a 52-year-old man from Wyncote, was hoping to board a Southwest Airlines flight from Philadelphia to Chicago when checkpoint personnel discovered two semiautomatic handguns, a revolver and three magazines in his travel bag.

A lawyer reported that Bland hurriedly picked up a travel bag in his rush for the airport, forgetting it contained the weapons.

One legal expert, experienced in such matters, told Mizell & Company that if Bland pleads guilty he will likely be fined and receive probation and a "record," but probably will not be incarcerated. Bland contends he had no intention of carrying the handguns aboard the aircraft.

SON OF PLAYBOY INC. ATTORNEY STOPPED WITH GUN [O'HARE AIRPORT]

APRIL 8, 2006

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Justin Shapiro, 26, of Evanston, Illinois, was arrested at a security checkpoint at O'Hare International Airport after he tried to board a plane with a loaded .32-caliber semiautomatic handgun in his luggage. The weapon had six rounds in the magazine.

The son of Howard Shapiro, general counsel and executive vice president at Playboy Enterprises Inc. in Chicago, Justin Shapiro was charged with unlawful use of a weapon, trying to board an aircraft with a weapon and failure to have a firearm owners identification. The younger Shapiro, who is employed as a sales manager, was released on \$10,000 bail.

COMEDIAN ARRESTED WITH GUN IN BRIEFCASE [LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

NOVEMBER 6, 2006

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Comedian / actor, Katt Williams, 35, was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport after an X-ray monitor at a security checkpoint identified a handgun in his briefcase. Further inquiries revealed that the unloaded weapon had been reported stolen.

According to his website, Micah S. Katt Williams won the Cedric the Entertainer's "best Los Angeles comics award" in 2001.

Williams has participated in a number of TV comedy specials, had an acting role in the 2002 movie "Friday After Next" and has worked with a variety of rapper / musicians such as Snoop Dogg. Booked at a Los Angeles police station, Williams was charged with illegally possessing a firearm.

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AIRPORT SECURITY CHIEF CAUGHT WITH BULLETS [T. F. GREEN AIRPORT]

FEBRUARY 2007

WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND

Joseph Salter, head of the federal Transportation Security Administration's operation at T. F. Green Airport in Warwick, Rhode Island, was stopped at an airport checkpoint when security personnel discovered six .38-caliber bullets on his person.

Salter explained that he was heading to the airport with his family and forgot that his coat had a leather pouch containing ammunition.

TSA officials promised to investigate the incident but a State Police official quoted in the media said Salter didn't violate any laws. As a former law enforcement official, Salter is licensed to carry a concealed weapon.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT HAD GUN ON UNITED AIRLINES [DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT]

MARCH 30, 2007 VIRGINIA

Uniformed flight attendant Janet Tucker, 45, was arrested at Dulles International Airport for allegedly carrying a concealed handgun aboard United Flight 7591, which originated at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Upon landing at Dulles, Tucker reportedly noticed that she had inadvertently stashed the weapon inside carry-on luggage and voluntarily notified authorities.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and other law enforcement agencies were investigating how the weapon passed through a security checkpoint unnoticed in Atlanta. Tucker was interviewed and released but ordered to appear in Loudoun County Court at a later date.

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