

Transportation Security Administration agents violate passengers' trust, steal money and property

AGENTS FOUND GUILTY OF THEFT WHILE ON DUTY, PASSENGERS LOSE CONFIDENCE IN SECURITY

BY CLARENCE TURPIN
STAFF WRITER

Former Transportation Security Administration agent Pythias Brown was recently sentenced to three years in prison for stealing approximately \$800,000 in property from passengers passing through airport security. This was such common practice for Brown that it nearly became routine.

The TSA is an agency created to safeguard U.S. transportation systems. Their main function is to make flying a protected process for all. Having a TSA agent steal from passengers undermines their intended purpose and violates passengers in costly ways.

"They never searched us, they never searched our bags," said Brown in an interview with ABC News. "It was so easy that I could walk out of the airport with bags of passenger belongings."

From testimony in additional interviews with Brown and other TSA agents, one could speculate that the accessibility

and lack of supervision made stealing from passengers normal behavior.

"It was like being on drugs," said Brown to ABC. "I was like, 'What am I doing?' but the next day I was right back at it."

TSA agent John Irwin also provided reasoning behind his decision to steal \$520 in cash from a single passenger. Irwin claimed the passenger was rude to a co-worker and "had it coming to him."

While there are TSA agents who do not steal, the justifications that the accused and convicted TSA agents are offering to the media suggest a disregard for protocol and passenger's property. Assistant Professor of Justice & Policy Studies Sanjay Marwah identifies a rationale behind this pattern of excuses.

"I think they were trying to justify their own behavior and argue that many do it to make themselves feel better and rationalize why they did it," said Marwah. "This is called technique of neutralization in criminology, which you can see in the ABC News interview with them."

These responses from TSA agents leave many people feeling uneasy about past and future run-ins with airport security. Among those who feel uneasy are students from Guilford College who find themselves frequently flying throughout the course of a year.

Sophomore Omer Atishkin of Israel has crossed paths with the TSA on many occasions.

"I still have to fly regardless of what has taken place," said Atishkin. "I would avoid flying with that company if it seems to be connected to the theft."

Other students report losing confidence in airport security and TSA agents.

"TSA agents are supposed to keep you and your belongings safe," said senior Mellissa Beeh. "So how could you trust them?"

Junior Lizz Carella considers a more preventive approach saying, "I would be more careful in the way I pack next time."

Several media sources are offering advice that might prevent passengers from becoming victims.

In an interview with ABC, Brown revealed some tips for travelers. These include: 1) Do not put valuables in checked bags, 2) try not to set off x-ray alarms as this draws more attention to you and your belongings and 3) do not trust TSA-approved locks, due to the fact that they are easily manipulated by the agents. An acceptable alternative would be to provide your own locks with a code unique to you or a device that only a limited amount of people are able to unlock.

This is a truly unfortunate development for the general public, but with tighter precautionary measures, fewer people should become victims of internal airport theft.

It takes two to merge but all to agree

BY L.A. LOGAN
STAFF WRITER

\$45 billion. Deal or no deal?

A possible merger between British BAE Systems and European Aeronautic Defense and Space collapsed due to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's refusal to sign off on the deal, as well as a concern for the confidentiality of U.S. Department of Defense contracts with BAE Systems. If the five governments – the U.S., U.K., Spain, Germany and France – had agreed upon a deal, they would have produced the world's largest aerospace defense company.

"It could create a genuine defense-aerospace industrial champion for Europe," Alexander Nicoll, military expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London told the New York Times. "Indeed, the deal would be a natural reaction to the prospect of shrinking defense-equipment markets."

EADS is the world's second largest aerospace and defense company, specializing in the manufacture of commercial and military aircraft. British BAE Systems is the U.K.'s largest defense contractor and one of the largest suppliers to the U.S. Department of Defense.

One main issue for merger's disapproval was the potential release of U.S. military contract information to other governments.

"If other countries got a hold of our secret contracts they'd be able to better prepare for us knowing that information," said former Marine aircraft mechanic Joe Logan. "We definitely should be wary of the merger because we don't want anyone tapping into our secret resources and knowing our capabilities."

The U.S. government holds military defense information in strict confidence and was concerned about the transparency of information that might follow a merger.

"(The United States wants) to protect secrecy of BAE's national security operations in the U.S.," according to the Wall Street

Journal. "The U.S. last year accounted for more than 40 percent of BAE's \$31 billion in revenue. A significant part of this came from sensitive operations."

Problems arose from various governments in seeking a collective agreement on this mega-deal throughout negotiations.

"The critical issue is what the government ownership will be," an anonymous source with direct knowledge of the talks said to the New York Times. "The only reason not to do a deal would be around government ownership."

Britain's Secretary of Defense Philip Hammond said Britain was prepared to block the merger unless the governments of France and Germany reduced their EADS stakes. Specifically, Hammond said he recommended vetoing the deal if it would give France and Germany control of EADS.

"Angela Merkel took Tom Enders (EADS chief executive) by surprise," said Dick Olver, chairman of British BAE Systems, to The National. "He didn't expect her to be so negative. She was the one who made the deal not go ahead."

"France wants to keep a stake but will not rule out adding more," an observer told the New York Times. "Other countries did not want to miss out on the opportunity to profit from this massive merger and showed support for the deal. Yet, there was concern about an unequal balance of control among countries."

"France wants to keep a stake but will not rule out adding more," an observer told the New York Times. "Germany wants to match France's role to avoid being left aside by Europe's other main powers, and Britain wants to cap state involvement."

Great Britain, Germany and France refused to finalize the historical deal due to their roles within the merger.

"I'm ready to admit that we never expected to face such opposition against the deal, in particular not in Berlin," Enders said in a letter to employees.

Get Ready! Online SPRING 2013 Registration is Coming Soon!

Plan and prepare for Spring 2013 online registration
November 11, 2012 - January 27, 2013

Steps before registering:

1. Clear all of your holds!
2. Set up an appointment with your advisor and ask for your Alternate PIN because it is required for registration.
3. Access your Degree Evaluation on BannerWeb. Print it out, for you will need during the meeting.

Online Registration Schedule

Starts at 10:30 p.m. on the beginning date specified

Student Status:

Senior or Unclassified

(current earned credits 88 or greater or students that already have a college degree)
Sunday, November 11 - Sunday, January 27

Junior

(current earned credits 56 to 87)
Tuesday, November 13 - Sunday, January 27

Sophomore

(current earned credits 24 to 55)
Thursday, November 15 - Sunday, January 27

First Year

(current earned credits less than 24)
Sunday, November 18 - Sunday, January 27

Message from the Academic Dean's Office: In response to student wishes, we are posting on the web course syllabi for most departments for most courses scheduled for spring 2013. These syllabi are from previous terms but should provide a good idea of what each course will include. You may access them by www.guilford.edu, click Current Student, Course Schedules; choose spring 2013, then click on the course title and the faculty name next to "Sample Syllabus".

Other registration information can be found on GuilfordNet