

# Make the Terrorists Do the Profiling

BY PENN JILLETTE

**T**HE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, A COUNTRY built on the separation of church and state, is in the middle of a “God Bless America” holy war. So airports are screening (hassling) young-to-middle-aged men of Middle Eastern ancestry. We want to keep some of our civil rights, so we’re uneasy about that racial profiling. Profiling isn’t fair. So, in order to hassle young-to-middle-aged men of Middle Eastern ancestry, we’re also hassling everyone else. That way, we’re profiling everyone, and that’s fair. Fair, but not free. And not American.

What if, instead, we make the bad guys do the profiling? Get rid of all the showboat security. Try some freedom. Let anyone with a ticket get on the plane with anything he wants, and then make the terrorists decide which passengers to attack. Does that mean some frequent flyers will get on the plane with knives? Yes. Mace? You bet. Guns, knitting needles, and nail clippers? Yes, and some will have all three. And no one will know who has what. The bad guys will have to do the profiling, and that’s only right — after all, bad guys are supposed to do bad things.

So our three terrorists — bin Moe, bin Larry, and bin Curly — have their weapons and are going to take over the plane. They know that, as soon as they start, people will fight back. So, they have to profile to get rid of the most likely fight-backers. Bin Moe will say, “OK knuckleheads, I figure we can kill at least three people before anyone fights back. We don’t know who has what, so let’s pick our targets. Bin Larry, you shoot the guy with the “Remember our MIAs and POWs” hat and hope he’s not wearing Kevlar. Bin Curly, you get the biker dude. And me, Allah damn it, I don’t know whether to take out the hardcore feminist or the grunge kid with the boots and piercings. Or I wonder if that 70-year-old woman with the knitting needles and the “Second Amendment Sisters” pin might be trouble. We don’t have to worry about the long-haired magician with the “Give me liberty or give me death” T-shirt — he’s just a windbag. But, that guy of

African ancestry — aren’t a lot of African-Americans cops? And what about the Irish-American guy? You know, the fighting Irish. And, uh-oh, there’s another young-to-middle-aged man of Middle Eastern ancestry. What if he’s a patriotic American? Maybe I’ll just whack the guy with the nail clippers....”

If a terrorist is willing to kill himself, he can take others with him. The government couldn’t stop a pack of death-tripping, god-fearing whackos on 9.11, and it won’t be able to in the future. In fact, the government made it easier for the 9.11 bad guys because they knew they’d meet no armed resistance and that we always cooperate with hijackers. I’m guessing that, on three of those planes, by the time the passengers realized that cooperation was a bad idea, it was too late for the unarmed good guys to fight back.

The one thing that can stop terrorism is a free, secular society. Some people might flaunt their firepower on the plane by trimming their nails, but most will be sitting like free citizens. When a little band of deeply religious men decides to kill a lot of people on, and with, the plane, they’ll have to deal with free citizens, not sitting ducks.

I’m not taking risk lightly; one death from terrorism is way too many. There’s no such thing as an acceptable loss of innocent life. But, isn’t the same true for freedom? Isn’t any loss of freedom unacceptable? A lot of patriots have chosen death over loss of freedom. Isn’t that what patriots do?

“Live Free or Die” is not just for plucky little New Hampshire. We’re giving up our liberty for a PR illusion to get people to feel safe enough to fly. And it isn’t working. My friends are choosing to drive, not because they’re afraid to fly (driving is *much* more dangerous), but because they don’t want to wait in line to be felt up by security pigs. No matter how long you wait in line to be humiliated, no one — not even the government — can make life perfectly safe.

I hate to lay this heavy 411 on y’all, but we’re all going to die, no matter what. And all that time you spend being pushed around at the airport, having your shoes sniffed for fake safety — you’re not going to ever get that back. That’s precious life wasted. And precious freedom. **R**



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