

Then, no more than 30 seconds later, a distressed woman was circling the empty area where her bags had been. We told her about the cops' quick grab, and the last we saw of her was when she went running, crying and cursing up the escalator.

Later, in the security area, we told staff there what had happened. They proudly assured us that every square foot of the entire Las Vegas terminal was covered by at least one camera. The woman had committed the offense of leaving her bags unattended, even if it was for a minute or less. They said it may have cost her a fine of \$500 to get her bags returned.

That's just one example of what to expect when entering an airport terminal these days. You can avoid trouble by just following the posted rules, and the cameras will be there to protect you. Disobey, and the cameras will be there to nail you.

Of course, the most critical moment each traveler must face in airport security is when going through the frisking and searching ordeal. It's vitally important to fully understand in advance what is expected when in that line, including what you may or may not take on your flight. The list changes frequently, so it's your responsibility to keep up on the information.

On another recent flight, after my spouse's suitcase went through the x-ray process, she was pulled aside by two stern-looking guards. They did the electronic stick search of her entire body, and then began on her opened suitcase. Clothing and other items went flying all around, as they seemed to be looking for something very dangerous. Other staff joined in the search.

I had visions of visiting my spouse in Alcatraz for carrying something evil in the suitcase. We were told they had detected mercury, a banned substance, somewhere in the suitcase. It's often used in explosives, hence my spouse was a suspect in transporting dangerous materials.

Moments later, one of the cops triumphantly held up the offending article, a medical thermometer. With nervous laughs all around, and without the thermometer, we were permitted to board our flight.

Whenever you fly today, expect delays and searches because of security. We all know it's so tight because suicidal maniacs are holding world travelers hostage. Despite the inconveniences, we should be thankful to those airport security people for keeping flying safe.