

PIPE-BOMB FIASCO POINTS OUT BROWN ELEPHANT IN ROOM



FOOTNOTES
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Pro-tip: The next time airport security won't let you past the visitors area with your double-double, just tell them it's a pipe bomb. Not only will they let you through, but apparently they'll let you hold onto it.

Thankfully, Skylar Vincent Murphy, the 18-year-old caught with a 15-inch pipe stuffed with gun powder, insisted that the Edmonton International Airport staff keep it, according to CBC. It wasn't until a week later, after vacationing in Mexico with his family, that he was arrested.

His punishment? A \$100 fine, one-year probation and a \$500 donation to the U of A burn victims unit.

Excuse my outrage, but as someone whose family members are not-so-randomly subjected to extra scrutiny when travelling, it's impossible for me to not point out the big brown elephant in the room.

I know, these white privilege arguments suck, but let's look at a few case studies of other Canadian passengers who have rightfully and wrongfully made international news lately.

Last October, an Iranian-born Montreal man was accused of trying to lug bomb-making materials onto

an airplane. He was likewise charged with possession of an explosive substance, as well as attempting to transport said substance on an airplane, mischief and attempting to endanger the aircraft. That last charge alone carries a maximum 14-year sentence.

Why weren't the same charges laid on Murphy? Aren't they supposed to seize your computer and check it for cryptic "the falafel has been spiced"-type messages?

An Osgoode Hall Law Journal article reports: "Since 9/11, Arabs, Muslims, and those who look Arab or Muslim report being subjected to high scrutiny at Canadian airports." But as we learned from the Boston Bombings, terrorism is not limited by race.

The bungling of Murphy's case wouldn't be so appalling if the opposite ineptitude wasn't so common, like the case of Ayan Hassan, the Edmonton woman last year who couldn't leave the country because she mistakenly ended up on America's no-fly list.

I'm sure that Murphy made an innocent mistake. He's a young man from rural Alberta with a fascination for flammable things. I was once a young man from rural Alberta with a fascination for flammable things, too.

But had I brought said flammable things on a family vacation, it would probably be the last time my passport was stamped.

Take that, terrorists

You hear that, al-Qaida? Better think twice before you plot your next attack, otherwise you'll have to liquidate your iPad savings and spend the next 12 months occasionally checking in with a well-mannered officer.



Ryan Mason, Suzanna Brytan and Cathryn Sprague stand in what will be a gardening patch this summer. RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

Urban Farm expands one patch at a time

Local food. Students setting up urban garden business



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Piece by tiny piece two University of Alberta students are looking to reclaim urban land for food and create a small farm of their own.

Cathryn Sprague and Ryan Mason, two Masters' students studying environmental sociology, are behind the Reclaim

Urban Farm, which aims to take small pieces of under-used land and repurpose it for growing food.

So far the pair have signed up eight plots that will grow fresh greens and other vegetables this year and in return the landowner will receive a weekly box of whatever is in season, while the rest of the produce will be sold at farmers markets and to local restaurants.

"It works really well for seniors and young families who don't have time to garden," said Sprague.

Mason said he sees the

Urban Farm

Anyone interested in working with the group can contact reclaimurbanfarm@gmail.com.

project as part business, but also part community project.

"I have been describing it as a social enterprise. It's a business with social and environmental goals, built into the philosophy and the constitution of the business," he said.

Operating a disjointed

farm like this will be challenging, the pair admits, but they also see an upside.

"Say one site gets hit by hail, the other sites probably aren't hit as badly," says Sprague.

The St. John's institute is loaning some of their space for the project. The institute's executive director Suzanna Brytan said she can't wait to have the garden planted.

"I love the impact it will make on this community to have something that is found nowhere else in this community," she said.

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