

AIRPORTED TO KNOWHERE



AIRPORTED TO KNOWHERE by *Mike Bozart (Agent 33)* |
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[revised in February 2016 and then again in March 2017; hopefully, it's ok now.]

So, there I was, standing in the check-in line at CLT (Charlotte-Douglas International Airport) on a warm, bright, sunny September morning in 2010. I was going to see my fiancée at the time, Monique (Agent 32), in the Philippines. The airport mood seemed to be one of a yawn time ago. *Have I used that expression recently?*

There was an older gentleman behind me. He was a white guy with white, large-frame, oval glasses, maybe 70 years old, sporting a white tank top with some Florida beach logo on it. He was wearing white tennis shorts with white socks and white tennis shoes. *I guess his favorite attire color is white.*

I had a large piece of no-longer-rolling (the wheels had become immovable feet) luggage behind me. Both of my hands were carrying items: a laptop, duffel bag, airline tickets, et and cetera. *Et and cetera. I wonder if anyone will find that mildly amusing.*

As the line would move up a few feet, I would have to turn and drag the red canvas-covered, three-foot luggage cube, while trying not to lose control of the other items. The older Floridian behind me – who had no luggage – noticed me struggling with this at times.

“Hey, why don’t you just let me inch your luggage forward?” he very politely suggested.

“Sure,” I consented. “Thanks. Thanks a lot.”

“No problem. Glad to assist.”

He then began to slide the monstrous piece of luggage for me as the line advanced by pushing it with his bony knees and shoe toes. This continued for about twelve minutes in silence until we were next to be called at the ticket counter.

A white, blonde-haired, mid-30s-appearing, female airline employee looked at the front of the line. "Next," she firmly announced.

I walked up to the counter with my ticket and passport in my right hand. She grabbed the items and scanned them. Next, a boarding pass was perfunctorily printed.

"Any luggage to check, sir?"

"Yes, two pieces."

I then turned to get my colossal baggage from the older guy. But, I didn't see him ... anywhere. And, I didn't see my extra-large piece of cube luggage, either. A wave of panic rushed through me. *Oh, krap! [sic] The old fokker [sic] flew off with it! He scammed me. How naïve am I? I broke rule no. 1 of airports: Never lose sight of your luggage. Now I'll have to buy Monique a new gift and set of clothes. Darn! This effing [sic] sucks rotting moose eggs. Moose eggs?*

I ran towards the nearest concourse gate. I made a left turn to see what appeared to be the front door of an old American east-coast railway station. I opened the door, and it was like it was the 1890s inside. *What the fock! [sic] Am I in the Twilight Zone? Am I dreaming all of this? If so, wake up!*

There were about a dozen people inside going about their business in dress of that time period, but no one paid me any attention. It was like they couldn't see me – like I was a ghost. *I feel like I've fallen into one of my surreal short stories ... and I can't get out.*

I retreated back towards the airport's main concourse in a state of shock. I rounded the corner and I was suddenly back in the 21st century once again. It was the same September day in 2010, just two and a half minutes later. *What the hell was that back there? Is a portion of that corner a wormhole? Or, have I lost my mind? Did someone put something in my coffee at Starbucks this morning? Or, did I? No, I'm out of those 'granules de grandeur' now. Maybe a flashback? If so, I hope there are no more. Well, not for a while. I don't want to flip out on that long trans-Pacific flight.*

I kept searching the airport, concourse by concourse (and stayed in the present time). Then I saw him, Mr. Florida, in an eating area in Concourse E. My red piece of Titanic-size luggage appeared to be beside him. *That lousy scoundrel. What a worthless thief! He must be a pro at this. A veteran airport pilferer.*

I rushed up to him. "Why did you leave with my luggage?! Are you some kind of professional airport thief?"

"Gosh, no, sir. Most certainly not. I am going to get it checked for you, so that you don't have to pay the overage fees." *Overage fees?*

"What do you mean that you are going to get it checked for me? You can't get my luggage checked for me. You don't

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