

Airport Security & Double Standards

September 11, 2013 By [David Menzies](#)

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“Take off the cap!” barked the TSA official working security at Los Angeles International Airport.

The recipient of this curt order was my young son, Sean, who was brandishing a Batman baseball cap. News Flash: Apparently, 11-year-old Canadians are responsible for a disproportionate amount of

terrorism. But I digress...

In any event, the kid complied and dad (for a change) kept his triple-XL mouth shut. When you have a flight to catch it's seldom prudent to perturb those ever-so-pleasant folks working airport security.

Still, I felt compelled to return to the screening area once the family was safely seated in the departure lounge. And here's what I observed: some Muslim women proceeded through the checkpoint without having to **remove their headwear (hijabs.)**

How odd. If one can presumably stash a box-cutter or a dollop of C4 underneath a baseball cap, surely an **hijab** can serve the same purpose?

I approached a policeman standing guard. I politely asked him: why the apparent double-standard?

He told me **hijabs** cannot be removed because “that would be against their religion.”

I corrected the officer, noting there's nothing in the Koran that mandates the wearing of the **hijab**.

“OK,” he conceded. “But it's a cultural thing or something.”
Or something.

Then he said in a tone reminiscent of how a principal would speak to a seven-year-old: “You see, sir, in America, Americans and people visiting America have rights.”

No argument there. Except for a small caveat: surely there's a reasonable expectation that one's “rights” will be curtailed somewhat when one enters an

airport. That's why we are prodded and poked and X-rayed when we proceed through security in the first place. That's why one can't waltz into a terminal brandishing a legal handgun.

The cop simply shrugged. I upped the ante: if those women had been wearing full-face coverings such as a **burqa** or **niqab**, would they have been forced to unveil to confirm their identities?

"Nope," came the reply. "It's because that's a religion thing, too."

My jaw was now resting on the linoleum.

Reminding him that the vast amount of terrorism in the world today emanates from those shouting "**Allahu Akbar!**" before pressing the detonator, the poor constable's face contoured as though he had just bitten into a sour lemon. Our conversation was over.

Still, on reflection, perhaps I got off easy. After all, I wasn't detained against my will and put through the wringer – which is precisely what happened to author David Jones at London's Gatwick Airport last year.

According to an article in ***The Telegraph***, Jones placed his belongings into a tray to pass through the X-ray scanner when he spotted a Muslim woman in a **niqab** breeze through the area without showing her face.

In a light-hearted aside to a security official who had been assisting him, the 67-year-old said: "If I was wearing this scarf over my face, I wonder what would happen?"

Oh dear. Red alert! Jones was promptly accused of racism and sequestered. An airport security guard, a British Airlines official, and even a policeman all agreed he had been "insensitive" with his comment and needed to apologize. After being detained for almost half-an-hour, Jones issued a **mea culpa**; otherwise, he risked missing his flight to Portugal.

But Jones also rightly noted: "I had not made a racist remark but purely an observation that we were in a maximum security situation being searched thoroughly whilst a woman with her face covered walked through. I made no reference to race or religion."

Amazingly, Department for Transport rules don't prevent people covering their faces at U.K. airports for – you got it – "religious reasons."

Bottom line: Wednesday marks the 12th anniversary of 9/11. How sad that whatever lessons we supposedly learned on that dark day back in 2001 already seem to have been sacrificed upon the alter of political correctness.