

# *Air Security Snares Times Writer*

By LAEL MORGAN

The problems of flying in the bush have increased considerably since airport security tightened to prevent hijacking. Hunters are often disgruntled by being divested of their skinning knives and firearms must be shipped with care, but mostly it is a matter of increased delay while airlines employees search the carry-on luggage.

A word of warning, though, from this writer who researched the problem all too closely recently enroute from Los Angeles to the Aleutians. The screening can get tough.

My problems began when a

Western Airlines employee told to declare my arms at the ticket counter and airlines personnel would take them from me and give them back at the end of my flight.

Dressed in my city finery, I walked into Los Angeles International airport and blithely said to the girl at the Western counter, "I have a gun."

"Don't say that so loud," she hushed. And before I knew it, two security men grabbed me by the arms and propelled me to their office where they called the Los Angeles Police Department.

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# Writer Snared...

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I was to be arrested for carrying a concealed weapon, they informed me.

"Who's concealing?" I wanted to know.

"This is serious. It's a felony!" one of the officers cautioned. And sure enough, it was!

The Los Angeles Police Department sent five officers to look me over and two more arrived on the scene right behind them.

"I guess I must look pretty dangerous to you," I admitted. "But with all of you here, who's minding Los Angeles?"

"This is a felony," they repeated. "Customary procedure is to arrest you and take you to the Los Angeles jail where you must bail yourself out."

"You mean I'll miss my plane?"

"Maybe quite a few planes."

While I cooled my high heels and plyed my knitting, the men went over my gun (a Colt Woodsman) and admired my new skinning knife. Via computer they checked my criminal

record. (Clean, thank Heaven). They also checked to see if the gun had been stolen. It hadn't but it was unregistered and naturally they chided me for that.

They went through my wallet several times, studied my Tundra Times press pass, weighed the fact I was on assignment for National Geographic.

I explained that Atka — the island for which I was headed — was sustained by reindeer hunting and if a woman isn't bold enough to hunt reindeer, she is at least expected to wing an occasional ptarmigan to help with the food supply.

Finally, just five minutes before my plane took off, L.A.'s finest decided to give me a break. They bagged my arsenal and gave it to the pilot to hand carry and it was duly returned to me at the northern end of the trip.

"But next time, lady, pack that gear in your duffle bag. I don't care what Western told you. Pack it. And that will save us all a lot of trouble."