

## **The Airport**

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My mother left for Europe aboard Air France this weekend. As directed, we arrived at the terminal two hours in advance. Then we stood in line to ask which line was for check-in so that they could direct us to another line to have the baggage x-rayed before my mother was sent to one more line to get through the preliminary check where they matched her identification with her boarding pass and then directed her to stand in “that line over there” to have her hand-luggage scanned and unpacked before they finally sent her to the gate to stand in line to board.

It's a good thing I wasn't flying! This pre-flight tedium was enough to tax even the most patient traveler. Beleaguered airline personnel must have tired of the endless onslaught of complaints and inane questions. In fact, to prevent repetitive inquiries, they posted a sign announcing flight specifics, including flight number, gate information, meal menus, and movie selections. They even listed the pilot's name.

“That Bastard! Where is he taking you?” My mother was appalled by my outburst. Sure, we had already navigated three of the seven requisite lines and our feet were killing us, but this did not excuse my language.

But I was on a roll. “Who's the Bastard in charge?” I demanded to know. That got the attention of most folks in line who gave me disapproving looks. My mother asked me to vent my frustration in a more appropriate manner.

We got up to the counter where the agent prepared my mother's boarding pass and wished her a good flight to Milan. “Milan?! Tell that Bastard he's supposed to land in Paris!” Fearful that the airline employee would take offense at the profanity, my mother apologized on my behalf. But the young lady was not perturbed—she was accustomed to impolite travelers.

Eventually my mother's itinerary was sorted out, but not before I again voiced my disdain, “I can't believe they would put that Bastard into the cockpit!” The agent remained unfazed, but Mother had reached her breaking point. She was livid and told me so.

I quietly walked her back to the flight information sign and pointed: “Your captain today is: BASTARD.”

*[Monica apologizes for the gratuitous use of profanity in this article, but she stands behind her words.]*