

United Airlines Was Right to Remove a Belligerent Passenger

Anyone asked to leave an overbooked flight for which they purchased a ticket would be justifiably annoyed. They have somewhere they need to be, and it wasn't their fault United Airlines screwed up.

So when a passenger on United Airlines flight 3411 from Chicago to Louisville was randomly chosen to be removed, he was right to be angry. But that didn't give him the right to make a scene and delay the flight.

About eighty other people also had to get home. They didn't want to get bumped either. Why should one man be treated differently than the other passengers (including the ones who left their seats without a fuss when they were told they were getting bumped)? For him to have insisted that he alone shouldn't be bumped is the height of entitlement.

(RELATED: [“United Had a Much Better Solution than Kicking Off a Passenger”](#))

The man, now identified as Dr. David Dao of Kentucky, complained that he had to get to work on Monday. Did no one else on the plane have a job? He said he was a doctor and had to see patients. Should doctors be privileged over workers in other industries? Does his hospital only employ a single doctor and have no one else available to cover his rounds?

If the man was so concerned about people being bumped, why didn't he make a scene when the couple ahead of him was forced off the flight? Did he think his right to get to Louisville was more important than theirs?

After being told multiple times by multiple employees to get off the plane, and refusing, the police were called, and he resisted. Ultimately he was removed by force. That didn't have to happen if he had left the plane peacefully like the other people who left the plane.

As he was being dragged off, other passengers appeared outraged. "Oh, my god," a woman uttered. Fellow passenger Tyler Bridges took his phone out and filmed it, because filming things is now what everyone feels like they need to do to change the world. At a time when Syrian civilians are being gassed to death and beheaded, when North Koreans are being tortured in camps and Sudanese are starved in a war-caused famine, the video of an American being forcibly removed from a plane after refusing multiple requests "felt like something the world needed to see," Bridges [told](#) the *New York Times*.

Yet for all the outrage expressed by some of the passengers, none of them stood up and said, "I volunteer my seat." Apparently, they too, wanted to get home. Indeed, United offered hundreds of dollars to anyone who would give up their seat. There were no takers.

Later, the man returned with a bloodied face and caused the flight to be delayed by two hours for everyone, as United claimed they had to clean the plane.

Now the story is going viral on social media, and there is the same predictable outrage as with any popular social media stories – more heat than light, in other words. What do outraged people on Twitter think United Airlines should have done? Sat at the gate and never taken off because one passenger didn't want to leave? Forced someone else off? Granted, the security personnel called could have refrained from physically harming the intransigent passenger, but is it the airline's fault that he refused to go calmly, as other passengers did (and as the terms of the ticket they purchased allow the airline to request they do)?

To let him stay and bump someone else just because he made a fuss would be to reward bad behavior. It would be unfair to kick someone off a flight just because they act calmly like an adult rather than like a toddler having a tantrum. If the four United employees who filled the seats of the bumped passengers didn't fly to Louisville, a whole plane full of people leaving Louisville could have been canceled or delayed.

There are a lot of problems with service in the airline industry. Overbooking flights is a standard industry practice that annoys us all when it impacts us. But these are facts that impact everyone who flies. We're all in the same plane, as it were.

To focus all of our attention on the one person who feels he is above having to deal with the same disruptions and annoyances as every other airline passenger shows how powerful (and misguided) the social media outrage machine has become. Too bad that outrage can't be directed at something that really matters.

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