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[RICH THOMASELLI](#) | OCTOBER 30, 2021 7:20 PM ET

What Will It Take To End Unruly Passengers on Planes?

[Rich Thomaselli](#)

Rich Thomaselli is a 33-year writing veteran of newspapers, magazines, digital publications and more. He is an 11-time writing award winner over the course of his career. Rich lives in New York with his two sons, a college freshman and a high school freshman. You can reach him at rthomaselli@travelpulse.com



Airport security escorting a man off of an airplane. (photo via ranplett/E+)

It's been 20 months or so since the pandemic hit the U.S. and the mask mandate went into effect on domestic airlines.

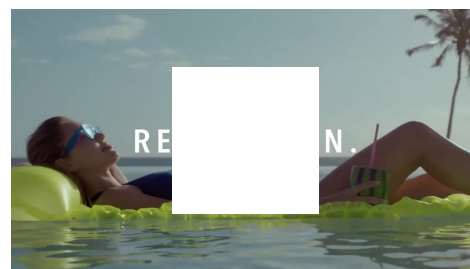
Or, roughly 20 months or so since the seminal moment when some passengers began a sea change during flying. Whether it was in the name of politics or in the name of personal freedom – or, let's face it, just in the name of "You're not going to tell me what to do" childish hubris, they started getting physical.

Real physical.

A Southwest Airlines flight attendant had teeth broken during an altercation in May, with the [assailant facing felony assault charges](#).

Earlier this week, an American Airlines flight from New York to California was diverted to Denver when a passenger [twice struck a](#)

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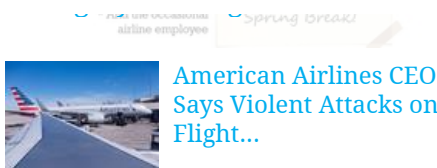
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They've tried banning passengers from the airline where the incident took place.



American Airlines CEO Says Violent Attacks on Flight...

They've tried duct-taping people to their seats.



Flight Diverted After Passenger Allegedly Punches Attendant

They've even tried the nice route, with advertisements appealing to fliers' good nature.



TSA Officers Found a Record Number of Firearms in 2021

Nothing has worked.



FAA Reports a Surge in Unruly Passenger Incidents

So the answer to the headline of this column as to what it's going to take end unruly passengers is this: It's going to take something dramatic, and the hope is that while it might be controversial, it's nonetheless favorable and proactive.

The industry needs to come together and ban passengers from all airlines in the aftermath of an incident.

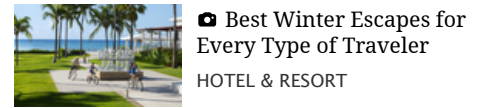
ALL airlines.

From the big three domestic majors of American, Delta and United, to the mid-majors like Southwest, JetBlue, Alaska and Hawaiian, to the budget carriers of Spirit, Allegiant and Sun Country, to the new guys on the block with Breeze and Avelo.

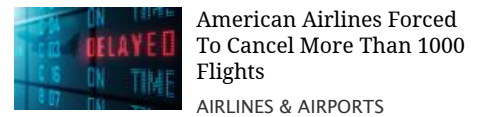
And when I say industry-wide, I mean industry-wide. That includes domestic regional airlines as well - looking at you, American Eagle, ExpressJet, SkyWest, Republic, Piedmont, etc. - but also major international airlines such as British Airways, Air France, KLM, Qatar, Emirates, Japan, Qantas, Cathay Pacific and more.

This industry needs to come together and make it virtually impossible for someone who physically assaults an airline employee to ever step foot on an airplane again.

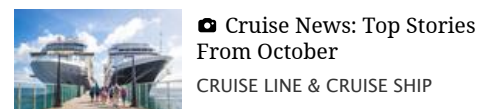
If some passengers are going to act like children, you treat them like children, and that means taking away what they love or need. If it sounds petulant, like taking away a child's phone or an Xbox, so be it.



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Yes, that might sound overly dramatic. But the flip side to being proactive is to be reactive, and being reactive could prove to be too late.

Imagine?

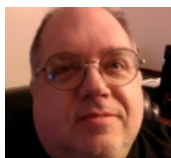
We've already had flight attendants bloodied and hurt, and the incidents continue to not only escalate but are becoming more brutal. Now imagine that some airline worker suffers more than a bloody nose.

Is that what it's going to come to?

Because if it does, God help us.

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