

Airline Discrimination Lawsuit: Client Profile

CLIENT: Hassan Sader
AGE: 36
NATIONALITY: Naturalized U.S. Citizen; born in Morocco; currently resides in Virginia
OCCUPATION: Former tennis coach
DEFENDANT: American Airlines, Inc.
ATTORNEY: David Rocah, ACLU of Maryland

STATEMENT: In 1994, I was so proud to become an American citizen because I always believed in American justice and democracy and how many opportunities this land has to offer. What happened to me on October 31 makes me question those beliefs.

On that day I was flying from Baltimore to Seattle to visit at friend. At BWI airport, I went through all the security that everyone else went through without incident. I complied with all the security requests without any questions.

I boarded the plane, I put my tennis bag in the overhead bin, and I took my seat. A few minutes later I noticed a female passenger and a flight attendant talking and looking in my direction. A few minutes after that, I was asked to leave the plane by an American Airlines agent. I was confused by what was happening, but I did everything that the agent asked me to do. I was not searched or questioned by any security personnel. I would have complied with any additional security measures. But I never got the chance.

Instead I was asked to sit in the gate area with my carry-on luggage while the agent booked me on the next flight. I was confused and hurt, and was hoping for a reasonable explanation. Finally I was told that one of the passengers didn't feel comfortable traveling on the plane with me.

The staff at the gate area was very sympathetic, and felt bad about what was happening to me. I knew that I hadn't done anything wrong, and that what was happening had nothing to do with security. I felt they were just trying to please another passenger.

When I realized I was going to be put on another flight, I started to cry. When I asked the agent what I could do about what had happened to me, she told me not to worry, and to just "blow it off." But it is too emotional and painful to blow off.

Today I'm bringing this lawsuit because I was treated like a second class citizen. I want to restore my confidence and faith in this country because this is where I want to be.