



Jeanne Robertson

See me in action on
YouTube



JeanneRobertson

Stick with the Tiny Shampoos

As a person who makes her living traveling year round, I feel obliged to offer a couple of pieces of advice for this last month of summer travel. Here's the first one: Wherever we travel, we represent the great state of North Carolina. Please be careful what you take out of hotel rooms. It comes back to reflect on all of us. Little soaps? Tiny shampoo bottles? A shower cap or two? Sure. Toss 'em in your bag. Hotels expect those to be gone. (From your room. Not the carts in the halls.) But rolls of toilet paper? Really, people. Quoting Sheriff Andy Taylor, "Act like somebody."

Waiting to go through airport security recently for a flight back to NC, I saw a TSA person open a lady's rolling cart and wah!la! There squeezed in next to her clothes were two unopened toilet paper rolls from her hotel.

I'm not saying for sure that she "took," as in "stole" the TP rolls. There's always the chance that she went to the front desk and said, "We're out at home. It would save me a trip to the store if I could purchase a couple of toilet paper rolls from the hotel." Sure, she could have done that. But none of us in line behind her at security thought that to be the case. Not the way we were exchanging glances when the TSA agent put each roll out on the table for all to see while she poked around in the passenger's bag. People laughed and started nudging others as they nodded toward the rolls on display. The passenger was obviously embarrassed but laughing as well. She was caught red-handed and knew it. A man in line mumbled, "Think she's a toilet paper salesperson?" I talked to her later. Yes, she was coming home to NC. How embarrassing? More embarrassing was when I told my husband about it. He said, "She should know better than to take toilet paper from the hotel room unless she's driving home." I think he was joking.

Here's another piece of valuable advice. If your hotel still uses a key that goes into a hole and has to be turned as opposed to a computer card, don't take the hotel room key. It can come back to haunt you.

I was at the Executive Inn Riverfront Hotel in Kentucky to speak at a luncheon. After the event, my client was to take me to the nearby airport. That

morning, I asked the hotel people for a late checkout time so I could go back to my room and change clothes after my speech. They couldn't give it to me because another group was checking in. They had to clean the rooms. Not a problem. I would have been happy to check my bags with a bellman and change at the airport but my client suggested that I store my bags in her room and change there before we left. Sounded good to me.

The Executive Inn Riverfront didn't have electronic keys at that point. They still had those older, beautiful, flat brass keys alluded to earlier. My client was more southern than I. When she gave me the brass key to her room, she drawled, "Now, puh'lease, don't lose this key, Jeanne. I've already lost two of 'em and I would be mor'ti'fied - ab'so'lut'ly mor'ti'fied - if I had to go back to the desk and get a third one." I assured her I wouldn't lose the key. I didn't want to be responsible for throwing anyone into an "absolutely mortified" state.

After the luncheon, I quickly changed clothes in her room, got my bags, met her in the lobby and we headed to the airport, talking nonstop. A short time later, I was sitting on a packed commuter flight. The door of the plane was shut and we were waiting to pull away from the gate.

Suddenly, someone started banging on the airplane door from the outside. The flight attendant looked through a little window, turned the big handle and opened the door. A gate agent came on board, picked up the PA system and announced with authority, "Will passenger Jeanne Robertson ring your flight attendant call button. Jeanne Robertson." Since that's my name, I reached up and pushed the button, thinking I had left something in the gate area. "Ding!"

When my bell sounded, the agent boomed through the PA system, "Mrs. Robertson, the people at the Executive Inn Hotel want their room key back!"

Everyone on the plane started laughing, including me. I knew what the situation was - my client had asked him to get the key which I had forgotten to give her. She probably went to high school with the guy. Who could have predicted he would use the opportunity to break into a comedy routine?

I stood up to get my purse and hit my head on the overhead bin. By then, the gate agent had come down the aisle and was standing next to me with his hand open flat, bouncing it up and down, implying impatience while he waited for the key. "Any time, Mrs. Robertson." The more passengers chuckled, the more he "milked" it and the more I couldn't find the key. I was rummaging through my suitcase-size purse trying to feel it. (Women know the situation.) I finally had to slant the purse sideways and shake everything down into a corner. He was still standing there with his palm open, rolling his eyes at other passengers when I finally put it in his hand. "Here. Sorry."

The agent began to walk away, but he had a laughing audience and everyone's attention. After a few steps, he turned in my direction. "Mrs. Robertson, if you're going to do this type of thing, don't come back to Kentucky." A few passengers applauded and high-fived him as he walked up the aisle. It was fun. When he was gone, the flight attendant shut the door.

Right there - right there - is where I should have zipped it up. But nooooo, I'm a professional speaker. I felt the need to explain to the people around me what had happened. "See, I couldn't get late check out and a lady lent me..." etc. Everyone within earshot was listening. At first. But slowly, one by one, they began to peel off and turn back to their magazines.

Finally, the only two people who seemed the least bit interested in my explanation were a man and woman straight across the aisle from me. They were willing to listen, so I kept right on explaining, lowering my voice as I leaned into the aisle in their direction.

"I knew what had happened, but when he boomed into the microphone 'The people at the Executive Inn Hotel want their room key back,' it made me nervous." The woman leaned even closer toward me and answered in a hushed tone, "Made you nervous? We've got a couple of their towels."

It's August. It's hot. Many of us are traveling. But as proud North Carolinians, let's try to "act like somebody." Stick with the tiny shampoos.