

Check-in at the Angelo airport can be personal. Now and then an old agent pops up to say good morning in the ticketing procedure, or one of the security agents gives a slight nod walking on the side though the lineup.

My suitcase is what's familiar. The front side reads "The World's Lightest Suitcase" in prominent white cast against black background plastic. My gear inside the world's lightest suitcase doubles in weight once folded and packed. Agents must suspect cannon balls rest inside the grip.

The shaving kit alone outweighs the contents of a family-size medicine chest. Four or five trips ago, that kind of stuff ran out in a hotel across the street from a Walgreen's. Every item needed was on sale in giant size.

For sure, the hotel desk did not trade across the street. The complimentary razor blade sent up the morning before had a blade honed to grate potatoes and a bar of jelled shaving soap. Enforced by a shave reminiscent of old-time barber work on the Mexican border, the shopping trip became a mission to lay in a big supply – to never run out again.

Strange, the aerosol shaving cream and flip-top deodorants proved to be altitude-proof. You'd of thought a

12-ounce can of Barber Josh would explode, or a six-ounce Dry Rite bomb would go off in an unpressurized cabin, taking off from ground temperature in Dallas of one hundred five degrees. But both cans pressured up to an estimated 150 pounds pressure. One tap of the lids squirted foam and deodorant three feet over the lavatory top.

The plane was overloaded with 200 passengers and one dog from Dallas to Boston. Two hundred was a rough shepherd's count on the humans; the dog count is on the money.

He, the dog, sat in row two, seat D. His owner sat in "C," same row. I was in aisle row 12. The last time dog odor came that strong was the winter Blake Adkins and I ran his 25 hounds after bobcats over in the Samson Canyon during goat kidding.

We had good dogs and two stout mules to ride. The pack was trained to jump everything from ground squirrels to mountain lions. We marked a good kid crop without taking one bobcat pelt or seeing one prairie wolf.

We'd have jumped more game if Blake hadn't been alone. Blake had lived in camps so long away from bath water that he smelled stronger than his hounds. The dogs slept outdoors and aired out at night. Blake camped with the

dogs, but habitually went to town on payday for recreation not conducive to outdoor life.

The morning paper gave a clue why the dog was boarded on the airplane. American Airlines lost money the last quarter, so the paper said. The company is trying all kinds of tricks like charging for early boarding, or charging more for coach seats upfront. Frequent flying gave early boarding privilege in my case. Nothing was stated or implied about seat mates, however. A newspaper article disclosed it was a rumor airlines were going to add pay toilets.

The dog wore a new brown leather muzzle to match the Labrador retriever color of his hair. He sat up in the seat, salivating through the muzzle slots from excitement. The roar of the jet reduced contact with his owner's commands. He might have been a right orderly mutt on the ground.

If the stewardesses knew the dog was on board, you couldn't tell it from that far back. Today's service, however, is so scant there'd be no way to evaluate how much attention a person received over his dog, or if either one was acknowledged by the crew.

The airline's magazine took the expected stance on boarding pets; they ignored that there was such a thing. I

was interested to know my rights in case I was seated by a Doberman or a German shepherd on a flight overseas, or a trans-continental to the Canal Zone.

After an airline and terminal change in Boston at the waiting room to fly out to Cape Cod, the only other four-legged customer was a dinky little blonde terrier snuggled up on her mistress' chest, practically under her chin. She needed a guard dog. (Fellow sitting close by pointed this out. Mertzon kids are taught not to stare in childhood.)

Three young guys seemed to be dog lovers. They stopped by her seat to pet the pooch. The dog was overprotective, bristling at the strangers. Be patient, please; scenes like this are hard to describe involving the prominent features of the female body.

She or the dog weren't on the last leg across the bay. Perhaps they were just attractions courtesy of the airline.