

## COMMENT

# It's the 'plane' truth, travelling is like a Hitchcock thriller

By Andrew Tutty

Halton Hills Accessibility Advisory Committee



Andrew Tutty

My wife and I recently flew to the U.S. over the Christmas break and travel is difficult, frustrating, and tiring, at the best of times. It is even more onerous when travelling as a disabled person.

Throughout, I kept thinking about just how nearly impossible the whole endeavor would be if I did not have my wife with me. It is hard to admit the loss of independence when disability strikes. We strive to foster our independence in all aspects of life, but there are always times when it is just not feasible. If I had to experience what we did on my own, I might have just chucked the whole thing.

With my very limited sight, the airports become nightmarish. Disembodied voices on public address systems are indistinguishable from each other and co-mingle. Add on thousands of stressed passengers and airport staff and the atmosphere becomes surreal. Each stage, checking in, going through security, finding your gate, and collecting baggage is like following breadcrumbs through a

circuitous, cavernous cacophony.

Add any wrinkle and it becomes a Hitchcock film. North by Northwest by South by East...by George!

The experience is never consistent. One trip can be smooth as silk, while others see little customer service, staff indifference, and lack of empathy. This seems inherent in the airline industry

While waiting at our gate, my wife happened to see a monitor and looked up to see that our flight was not only delayed, but the gate had changed. No announcement informed us or if there was, it was lost in the incessant tumult. If my wife had not been with me, I would still be at gate 5C. I might even be at the front entrance of the terminal. Continuing the Hitchcock motif, flying can certainly sometimes be for The Birds!

*Andrew Tutty is a member of the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee and writes about issues that affect people of all abilities.*

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