

Republican Perspective
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If You See Something....

In the wake of the recent jihadi terrorist attacks, the government tells us to go about our business but also reminds us to be vigilant: "If you see something, say something."

In fact, ordinary citizens' vigilance has helped thwart terrorist attacks. The shoe bomber, the underpants bomber, the Times Square bomber come quickly to mind.

Remember the "flying Imams"? In 2006, the six men boarded a US Airways flight, loudly prayed in Arabic, left their assigned seats, took seats near the front, rear, and window exit rows, ordered seat-belt extenders they didn't need, criticized President Bush and the Iraq War, talked about al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. They generally scared the heck out of the passengers and crew, and were removed from the plane before takeoff.

Then came the inevitable lawsuit, naming US Airways, the airport authority, and even *the passengers* who had reported the suspicious behavior. The suit was settled for a still undisclosed amount.

Congress then passed a law to protect citizens from being sued for reporting suspicious behavior.

In 2015, Ahmed Mohamed, 14, displayed in school a homemade clock which two teachers thought could be a bomb. Police were summoned and Mohamed was detained. Within a few hours the police had determined that the device was harmless and released Mohamed. He and his family have since moved to Qatar.

The teacher who reported the incident is immune from suit, but Mohamed's family is now suing the city for \$10 million and the school district for \$5 million.

In the aftermath of the incident, the media generally sided with Mohamed, and he became a celebrity. The city, police department, school district, the teachers, and---by extension---everyone who sided with them stood accused of Islamophobia.

For good measure President Obama predictably jumped in on Mohamed's side and publicly pulled the rug out from under the school and the police: "Cool clock, Ahmed. Want to bring it to the White House?"

A rare voice on the Left supporting the school was Bill Maher, who said “People at the school thought it might be a bomb because it looks like a f---ing bomb.” And “So the teacher’s just supposed to see something that looks like a bomb and be ‘Oh, wait, this might just be my white privilege talking.’”

There appears to be a lesson here. If you see something, say something? If you’re wrong, you can’t be sued but your employer---airline, school district, etc---can. And you will not be exempt from ridicule and from being branded an Islamophobe. In fact you can count on it.

In his address on November 25, President Obama sought to reassure Americans that they are safe, but repeated “If you see something, say something.”

But be prepared for public ridicule and accusations of Islamophobia if you’re wrong. And guess who the President will side with.