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A Wedding Planner Has Many Big Days, and Flights

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I'm a big shuttle guy, usually traveling from Boston to New York City, Washington, Palm Beach or Miami. So I don't have those long flights where I can really unwind after producing an event. Plus, in the busy season, I usually have to get to Cape Cod about three times a week from Boston. That's a puddle jumper flight, so there's not much time to do anything.

I recently asked my 17-year-old godson what he thought he might want to do when he grew up. He replied that he definitely wanted to do something that involved lots of travel, implying that he thought all the travel I do is pretty cool. It is, but it's also work.

I like to say I get married 10 times a year, and I really have the good fortune to run into a lot of former wedding clients, or their families or friends. It's also great when they give you a shoutout at the airport or on a plane and tell you how much they enjoyed that special day.

My entire team of workers will really try and accommodate people. I get a lot of last-minute calls from people who may be slightly freaking out before their weddings, which makes for some strange carry-ons. One time I had to transport 300 pairs of flip-flops to a wedding in Jamaica. Who knew they packed so neatly? Another time I had to take the top of a wedding cake from a Palm Beach wedding back to New York for the happy couple. It sat on my lap the entire flight. Another time a bride forgot her wedding dress, and asked that I bring it to her.

I never really had any security issues with any of the stuff that I carry for weddings. I did have issues with one of my belt buckles. I collect belt buckles and someone gave me one shaped like a fish hook. It's about four inches wide. When I was traveling from Washington to Paris, I was wearing it and had no problem. However, I had some problems with it in Boston, which I found weird, since I had no issues traveling overseas wearing it. The agent did tell me he really liked the buckle. But it was, nonetheless, a potential risk, and I had to check it.

The most precious package I ever carried with me was a ketubah, a document that's an integral part of a traditional Jewish marriage. I insisted it shouldn't be shipped because it was too important to the couple. Plus, I thought I was going to drive from Boston to New York City for the wedding, so I could easily carry it.

But because of some other obligations, I wound up flying from Boston to Miami, and then to Washington and finally, New York. The document was in a cardboard tube, and I figured, how hard would it be to carry a cardboard tube?

I placed it under my seat, but during the trip it rolled back to coach. I didn't know that until I went to grab it. I should have learned my lesson. On the second leg of the trip, I put it in the overhead bin. When we landed I opened the bin to grab the tube. Again, it wasn't there. This time, I started sweating and my heart was slamming out of my chest. I was opening other bins, looking under the seats. I was like a crazy man.

After three hours, I finally found it at the airline's lost and found. I didn't realize it, but one of the attendants took it from my compartment, put it in a compartment in the back of the plane, then took it from there and put it in the first-class closet. When no one claimed it, it was taken to lost and found.

Since then, I have never let anything out of my sight. My heart wouldn't be able to take it.

By Bryan Rafanelli, as told to Joan Raymond. E-mail: joan.raymond@nytimes.com.

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