*Listener:* Is it okay if I record, [name]?

*Speaker:* Yes, it is.

*Listener:* Great. All right. I’m gonna – this is not your typical interview where I ask you a lot of questions. It’s more that I want you to tell me the story about your recent trip, and I’d like to stay as quiet as possible. If I have some questions, I’ll ask you, but you don’t need to wait for me to ask you questions. If you have stories in mind, you can just go right ahead. Okay?

*Speaker:* Okay.

*Listener:* All right. Okay now, I’m gonna ask you about your thinking during situations and circumstances that came up on the airport, on the way to the airport, on the flight – anything from the moment you left your house, till you got home after the trip. So, you can start by giving me a quick summary of the trip if you’d like, and then I can ask some questions. Or, if you think of a particular experience that you had, just go ahead and tell me, ‘cause you don’t have to keep this in any kind of chronological order. Okay?

*Speaker:* Okay. Okay.

*Listener:* And, mostly I’m interested in what was going through your head when you had the experience, when you had to make a decision. Something like that. That sound good?

*Speaker:* Yep, sounds good.

*Listener:* Great. How about if you go ahead and just sort of give me – so you could start with the synopsis of the trip, or just dig right in and tell me whatever first comes to mind.

*Speaker:* Okay, so we recently took a trip – last week, actually, we went to the Dominican Republic where we actually went to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, which is an island inside of the country, I guess, of the Dominican Republic. It was me, my husband, and my two and a half year old son. We left last Monday. We had a 10:30 in the morning flight, so we left our house at 6:00 to give us enough time, ‘cause we know with international it could take some time to get through security. We went out of Newark Airport, and we live about a half hour away from the airport, so we decided to do like a park and ride where we park our car. There was one of those parking garages, and then they shuttle you to the airport. So, we used Vista Parking. So, they took us over. We parked the car; we hopped in the shuttle right away. It was only like a two minute wait, which was great.

*Listener:* Can you tell me more about also what’s going through your mind, or any conversations you had with your husband? Something about what you’re thinking when you’re experiencing that.

*Speaker:* I’m thinking, “I’m glad that the shuttle came,” and, “Okay, now we’re on our way to the airport. Do we know we’re in the right direction?” So it’s like – I felt like a sense of relief, kind of, that – you know, ‘cause you get nervous sometimes wondering – okay, is the shuttle gonna show up? So, yeah, I was very satisfied and just felt relieved. We went on the shuttle, and they dropped us off at our terminal. It was kind of a struggle ‘cause we did have a lot of luggage, and then I had my son in the stroller. So, just like trying to balance everything out was kind of frustrating I guess. You know, keep an eye on my son, keep an eye on the luggage. That was kind of frustrating. So, we went over to the check-in counter at United, and we had – we checked in online prior to that, where we actually paid to check our baggage already, so that was done. However –

*Listener:* How was that like? Tell me more about it, because I’ve never done that.

*Speaker:* Okay. Yeah, the day before, actually, you’re able to check in 24 hours ahead of time. And, I went on the computer, and I signed in – it just asks you for your confirmation number, and then it will ask you if you want to also switch your seats around. So, I actually – that was really great because I was able to move us up closer to row nine. Originally, we were at like row 17, so we were able to move closer to the front, so I was happy about that. And then, I was able to pay for my luggage right on the computer, so I wouldn’t have to worry about that. It was one less thing I had to do at the airport.

*Listener:* How did that work? Did you have some sort of a receipt when you did that?

*Speaker:* It actually – it sent an e-mail – it just sent an e-mail to me, which I printed out to have a copy for myself.

*Listener:* I gotcha.

*Speaker:* So, yeah, so when I went to the airport, I had already done that. However, it was a self-check-in kiosk it was called, so I’ve never used that before, so I was getting frustrated. I asked the woman at the desk if she could help me, and her response was, “It’s a self-check-in kiosk.”

*Listener:* When you’re trying to bring – when you’re trying to check your bags, right?

*Speaker:* When I was trying to check-in and get my boarding passes. So, ‘cause it was asking me to scan my passports, and I didn’t know how to scan it in which direction.

*Listener:* I know what you mean.

*Speaker:* So yeah, it was – and I’ve flown before, but I guess this is a new way to do things. The woman just like stood there, and there was other people that just like – I don’t understand – I still don’t understand why she couldn’t help me. But between me and my husband, we figured it out. The boarding passes printed, we figured out how to scan our passports, and then she took the baggage from us. That seems to be all she did was take the baggage. So, that was frustrating, ‘cause I feel like you’re getting paid to do a job. Why are you just standing there?

*Listener:* Yeah, you’re asking for help, yes.

*Speaker:* Yeah. When someone’s actually asking for help, and their response is, “No, this is a self-check-in counter,” that, to me, is – you know – not acceptable. So, after that, we proceeded to the security checkpoint where – I think we had to wait about a half hour to actually get through, which was pretty – went pretty smoothly. We had to take a lot of stuff out. My husband has a laptop, so he had to put it in one of the bins by itself. The thing is, after everything went through, because we were checking – we checked one bag, and then we carry on two bags, so one of the bags went off. It had all my son’s like snacks and everything, and oh, that –

*Listener:* Oh.

*Speaker:* So, they had to like just go through everything, which I understand, but it’s still – you know, it’s frustrating. So they had to go through all his snacks, and they had to test his cup to make sure it was milk in it. So that kind of delayed us a little bit. And again, it’s hard when you’re traveling with a child ‘cause you have – you had to have him walk through the metal detector also, and then you have the stroller you have to fold up, so it’s kind of just – you just want to get to the gate I guess at that point.

*Listener:* Right, right.

*Speaker:* So, after that, we went to just find where our gate was to make sure – you know, it told us on the boarding pass. So, we just saw like on the computer, you know, flight leaving, 10:30, to Punta Cana, on-time. So we said, all right, our flight’s on time, so we decided to go over to the food court area and just got some breakfast. We sat there, we had coffee, we took our time. At this point, it was about 8:15, so we had plenty of time to kill. So we sat there, we stopped at some stores, and then we went back over to the gate and we were just sitting there, and we were supposed to board at 10:00, but I realized it was like 9:30, so oh, there’s no plane here yet. That’s weird. Usually the plane is waiting, or you’re waiting for the plane to come in and people are coming off. So, eventually, 10:00 came around, and there was still no plane. So then I realized, “Oh no, we’re not boarding on-time.” So now I’m like, oh boy – I wanted to just get to the island and be warm and get out of the cold.

*Listener:* Oh, it was cold in New Jersey? Yeah.

*Speaker:* Yeah, it was cold. It was cold. I was looking forward to going into warm weather. So, I went over to one of the representatives who worked at the desk by the, I guess, the end of the terminal, and she says, “Looks like we’re gonna be delayed.” I said, “Well, how much?” And she goes, “I just don’t know yet.” So, that was not too reassuring. I was hoping for more of a definite answer. So, about 10:20 came, and finally they made an announcement that we would not be boarding until 10:50.

*Listener:* When were you supposed to board? When were you supposed to be onboard?

*Speaker:* We were supposed to board at 10:00.

*Listener:* Okay, okay.

*Speaker:* And we were supposed to take off at 10:30. So now, we weren’t – they were saying we weren’t gonna take off now until 11:30. So –

*Listener:* So what’s going through your head when you’re hearing about this?

*Speaker:* I’m saying to myself, “Great, this is some way to start a vacation. Now we’re losing time at our destination.” The point of taking an early flight was to get there early. So, I’m thinking to myself, “Well, is it really gonna be an hour delay, or is it gonna be more? Is there gonna be another announcement?” So, just worried about that, I guess you could say. So, we’re sitting there – we’re getting antsy, and my son was getting antsy. So, sure enough, we did see – the plane came, and we did board like they told us we would. So, once we got on the plane, they told us we’re gonna take off at 11:30. Everyone’s boarded; everyone’s on the plane. So, we’re just sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting, sitting. The pilot made an announcement. They said there was – we were gonna be number 15 to – to taxi off. So, actually, let me go back to – I’m sorry – before we got on the plane. So, they boarded us by – you know they said people with children can board first. Which was great, we were able to take advantage of that. So, we got on our plane, we put everything in the overhead compartments. We got situated; we took my son’s toys out and whatever. We were in row nine, and we were seat A, B, and C, which worked out great. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ right next to each other. We put my son in the middle of us. So, I sat on the aisle. I like the aisle, and my husband sat by the window.

*Listener:* Why do you like the aisle? What was good about it?

*Speaker:* I go to the bathroom a lot, so it’s good for me. I don’t have to hop over anyone. I can just get up and go. Also, I get a little claustrophobic also sometimes, so I like to be more out in the open if I can.

*Listener:* It gives you a choice if you need to –

*Speaker:* Yeah, which is great. I feel bad for my husband ‘cause he’s 6’3”, and he should really be able to have the extra room, but – oh well. So, you know, we got situated. The flight attendants – they made all their speeches, you know, their safety announcements, they told us to buckle up and prepare for takeoff. But, you know, we were just sitting there and then the pilot came on and he said, “We have 14 other planes in front of us to take off.” So, basically, just to hold tight. So at that point, I was like fuming. I’m – now we’re – I’m sorry. *[Side conversation]*

*Listener:* It’s okay.

*Speaker:* Okay. So, at that point, I’m saying to myself, “We’re never getting out of here.” We were supposed to be on at 10:30. 10:30 plane, now it’s almost 11:45, and now there’s all these planes in front of us. So, we were just – it felt very stuffy on the plane, too at that point. They had shut everything off. So we were just sitting there, waiting, waiting, waiting. We finally took off at 12:25.

*Listener:* Oh. So what was going through your head when you finally get to take off?

*Speaker:* Well, I’d say we were supposed to land at 2:15. Now, who knows we’re gonna land. We’re gonna miss lunch. We’re gonna miss all the time at the pool. So, I just was very upset. My husband was upset. My son was getting cranky.

*Listener:* How were you dealing with your son with that experience? What was that like?

*Speaker:* It’s hard because he’s crying – you know, you don’t want to be those people on the plane that everyone hates.

*Listener:* Yeah.

*Speaker:* But, we just – we had a lot of snacks that we packed him, so we kept giving him snacks. We took out his little DVD player as we were waiting to take off, ‘cause that kept him busy. So, we did the best that we could, I guess. Finally, we did take off. The pilot came on. He apologized, kept apologizing, you know, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry. We’ll try to make up the time and get you there as soon as possible.” So, overall throughout the flight, I’d say about 45 minutes into it, the stewardesses came around and offered us a beverage. They gave us the option to actually purchase food, which I’ve known that’s been around how they don’t give anything anymore – no snacks, no peanuts, no pretzels – you’re on your own. So that –

*Listener:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ how you felt about that. That’s of interest for me, for sure.

*Speaker:* I feel – all these years that we’ve travelled – how much does a bag of pretzels cost? Just give something. I mean, the price of an airline ticket is not cheap anywhere you go now. You don’t get anything anymore. You don’t get blankets. You don’t get pillows. You’re lucky you get a soda on the plane. So that I feel like – I feel like they have a lot of nerve, and no offense to you. I know you’re not the president – I hope you’re not the president.

*Listener:* \_\_\_\_\_ it personally. Don’t worry.

*Speaker:* I just feel like – how do you charge people? Like, they have that little jar of Pringles which has maybe 20 potato chips. How could you charge someone like $5.00 dollars for a little thing of chips, when you could get it in a store for $1.50? So, I just think that’s like a total scam. I just think it’s horrible. I mean, you’re spending so much money. Years ago, you’d didn’t even have to pay to check a bag. So now you have to pay to check a bag each way depending on where you travel. So, I just feel it’s like any way to make money, they try to do that on you now, which – they should be happy that they still have repeat customers and all that stuff.

*Listener:* You don’t need to worry about hurting my feelings. I actually want to know what you feel about everything – not just what happened, but how you felt about it. This is perfect.

*Speaker:* Yeah. So, yeah, so another thing, too. No blanket, no pillow. So, that’s like – I think I’m – you can’t get blankets anymore, so you have to – I mean, luckily for my son, I packed a little blanket, but I get cold. I can’t pack an old blanket on the plane. So that’s frustrating that they do want to make money any way they can on you. So, throughout the flight – back to the flight, they came around. So, they gave us our big drink, and then we just basically – they did everyone complimentary headphones, which I liked the fact of that. On the televisions, everyone had their own individual TV with the option to purchase the videos. So, they charged $6.00 dollars per person. However, the only thing you’re able to watch – now, I see in the guide in the pocket, you know, in the seat – the seat pockets – it has like 200 channels DIRECTV. So, I’m thinking, oh, this is cool. You can watch all these shows when you’re in the air. Well, I swiped my card, and it was only like three movies that you’re able to watch, and then I looked at – I started reading further, and it says once you’re a way – a certain amount of miles, the DIRECTV is not gonna pick up in the air.

*Listener:* Oh my gosh, and you were on an international flight.

*Speaker:* Yeah, so I said – well, I said then they shouldn’t even offer it.

*Listener:* Oh yeah.

*Speaker:* So, I was like thank God we didn’t all swipe our cards. So I said, there’s these three movies that I don’t even want to watch, so this was – this was just a big waste, basically.

*Listener:* Did your husband comment? Did either one of you comment to anybody about that and express?

*Speaker:* Well, when a flight attendant came around I did. She says – she was like, “I’m sorry.” She goes, “Yeah, once you’re – again – a mile away from shore, only the movies work.” She said only I could call DIRECTV and take it up with them.

*Listener:* Oh my goodness.

*Speaker:* Yeah, but I feel like if they’re using DIRECTV service, you should know about it. You should have an answer. Luckily, I had my portable DVD player which I brought on the plane with me for my son. So, he was entertained, so that was a big thing that he was happy.

*Listener:* Yeah, I can picture that. Keep him happy.

*Speaker:* So, during the flight, we did hit like a little bit of turbulence – some bumps along the way, and the pilot made a few announcements. You know, “Keep your seatbelts on. We are going over some bumpy patches,” but it was nothing that we couldn’t handle, and nothing out of the ordinary. So we just – about – I would say two hours into the flight – it’s supposed to be like a four hour flight, I believe. He told us that we’d be landing – estimated arrival time was gonna be about 4:00. So, I’m thinking, “Wow, we were supposed to originally land at 2:30. Now we’re landing at 4:00. We’ve lost a big chunk of the day.” So that was very upsetting to me. Because I know once you land, you have to go through customs. I’m thinking, oh my God, we still have to go through customs. Who knows when we’re going to get to the hotel? So that’s what was going through my head at that point. Also, I’d say about an hour before we did land, they walked around and they handed out custom forms for the Dominican Republic. So, I went ahead and I filled that out, I guess, you know, for your passport information – all that stuff. Around that time, too, they did come and ask if anyone wanted another drink, and they were also walking around with cups of water. So, that was that. They weren’t selling us snacks at that point. I did notice though, the air temperature throughout the flight – it would go from like hot to cold, hot to cold. There was no in between. So that was kind of upsetting. I couldn’t get comfortable, basically. I would have my jacket on, then I would take it off. It just wasn’t really an even temperature. My husband asked one of the flight attendants if there was anything they could do, and she says no, the pilot controls it, which – who knows if that’s true or not. You just don’t know. You don’t know if they don’t – if they’re just being lazy, they don’t want to ask.

*Listener:* Right. Right. I had heard the same explanation before myself. I don’t know really how it works, but yes.

*Speaker:* Yeah, and those little vents you have over the seat – that doesn’t really do much. So, we did – about a half hour before we were about to land, the pilot came on and he made an announcement, okay, “We’re so many miles away from Punta Cana. We’re gonna get ready to land.” They came around – the flight attendants – they collected garbage. They told us to move our seats back up – all that stuff. At that point, my son kept saying his ears were hurting him.

*Listener:* How’d you deal with that?

*Speaker:* Well, I gave him Tylenol, but I knew it wasn’t gonna kick in. That was the thing. So, I – he’s too young to – I know I’ll chew gum. He’s too young to chew gum. So, I just kept telling him to swallow, swallow, swallow. I was trying to show him the motion to swallow, but he was really – he was hysterical crying. There was like nothing to do to help him, and I just felt horrible just seeing him in so much pain. I would give him water to sip on and just – it wasn’t relieving. So, the whole time that we were – the plane was going down, he was just screaming his head off. I was upset that no one came over, either, to see if we needed anything – if he was okay.

*Listener:* Oh, you mean no flight attendants came to –

*Speaker:* Right, right. I thought they would come over and say, “Hey, is there anything we could get you to make him more comfortable?”

*Listener:* Yeah, you just had to face it on your own.

*Speaker:* Yeah, basically. So, we got through it. We landed. Luckily, we landed, and after we landed we were probably off the plane about five minutes after. We took everything out of the overhead compartments.

*Listener:* What was – getting off the plane, what was that experience like? Can you –

*Speaker:* That was a struggle because, again, I had to get my son. Someone had to hold him. Then I had the diaper bag. We had the two carry-ons. So, we’re trying to juggle everything. Then we got off the plane, and we were waiting for them to bring us the stroller – one of the representatives. So, we got the stroller. We had to wait probably about – I’d say like seven minutes for the stroller.

*Listener:* Oh, at the jet way before you actually – I know what you mean. Yeah.

*Speaker:* Yeah, so we got the stroller. We proceeded – we stopped at the bathroom first. That was the first stop. And then, after that, we went to the customs area where we went through. We had to give them our passports and our documentation. You also have to pay a $10.00 entry fee into the Dominican Republic, which I’ve never in my life heard of. I don’t know where – I don’t even know where – it’s per person, also. Just to enter the country. Never in my life have I heard anything like that. So, I’m like, “Oh my God, $30.00 dollars? We just got off the plane.”

*Listener:* Did you react in any way? What was – what else was going through your mind about that?

*Speaker:* I said, “Where’s this $30.00 dollars going?” Like, it’s a very poor country. I said, “Is this going to feed someone’s child?” I couldn’t fathom it. I think they’re stealing our money. So I was just shocked – in a state of shock, basically. Like, oh my God, you know? I said all right, I guess we have no choice. So, we went through with that. Then we waited for our luggage, which took about 15 minutes, which was not too bad. At this point, I was starving. I said, “Oh my God. I’m so hungry. I just want to get to the hotel.” After that, we had to look for – we booked it through Expedia, so we had to look for an Expedia, so I was looking for the sign for Expedia, which I found. They assigned us to a shuttle area. They told us we were gonna be shuttle number seven or something along those lines. We waited for the shuttle. They were also waiting for other people to fill up the shuttle. So we’re waiting, waiting, waiting. I’m watching the clock go by. I said this is just – we’re never gonna get there. We’ve been up since 4:00 in the morning. So I’m feeling just like exhausted at that point – exhausted, hungry, hot. I want to change into my swimwear. So, finally, 20 minutes after that, they filled the bus – the van, and we were on our way to the hotel. Luckily, we were the first stop.

*Listener:* The hotel?

*Speaker:* Yeah, they stopped at three hotels, yeah. So we were the first stop. We got off. The hotel we stayed at was called The Majestic. They greeted us with a cold beverage. They gave us a cold towel to wipe the sweat off. It was like the perfect arrival.

*Listener:* Cool. Very cool.

*Speaker:* So, I don’t know if you want to know about the hotel, or –

*Listener:* I guess probably not simply because we have sort of an agreed upon time that we’ll talk.

*Speaker:* Okay.

*Listener:* Let me step back and see if I can – I’ve got some questions I think I want to ask about what you’ve told me so far, and then you can tell me some more. When you were checking in, you mentioned that you decided to move your seats and sit together. Can you tell me more about that, about why you chose to do that and what was going through your head?

*Speaker:* Oh, when we checked in? No, we were sitting together to begin with, but we were further back. Our seats were like row 17, so I was happy to get us closer to the front of the plane. I was thinking we’ll get off the plane sooner.

*Listener:* Right, right. Good strategy.

*Speaker:* Yes.

*Listener:* And when you were waiting at the gate, I remember you said that you had like a half hour delay – oh, I’m sorry. It was a half hour you were going through security. Can you tell me more about what that experience was like and how you reacted in different ways? It took about a half hour delay in security.

*Speaker:* I said to myself, wow, I’m glad – to my husband, “I’m glad we gave ourselves enough time. I’m glad we left the house early ‘cause you know, who knows how long this line is gonna take?” I saw a lot of the security lines were closed. So I said, “Wow, I wish they had more people working, because then we would get through quicker.”

*Listener:* Was it a very crowded security line overall, and very few partitions open?

*Speaker:* Yeah, not too many partitions open. I \_\_\_\_ to think that travelling with a child, you should be able to move up closer to – \_\_\_\_\_\_ people with children. Maybe have a separate line for people with children.

*Listener:* Right, right.

*Speaker:* You know, to get them through quicker. I feel a lot of times with – you know, handicapped people in wheelchairs and stuff – I know they let them go through, which I understand – but I think people with small children, too, they should maybe make some kind of exception.

*Listener:* It is harder when a small child has to wait in line.

*Speaker:* Yes. Children don’t understand lines.

*Listener:* One of the other things that came up – I remember you said you had a delay at the gate. Did you – how did you handle that with your child?

*Speaker:* I kept taking him for walks around the airport. I took him to other gates. I said, “Oh wow, look at these,” you know, I showed him other airplanes. That kept him pretty busy.

*Listener:* How old did you say your son is?

*Speaker:* My son is two and a half.

*Listener:* Oh, okay. That gives me a kind of better frame of reference then, yeah.

*Speaker:* Yeah, yeah. So it’s very trying.

*Listener:* Right. When you were checking your bags, you did what you described as the self-check-in where you checked the bag that you were gonna use and you were using the kiosk, and I remember you said the person was not very helpful. Were there other options for you for dealing with your baggage, or –

*Speaker:* No, there was no other option that I know of.

*Listener:* Okay. And, also, you – I got some notes written here. That’s why I’m going back. When you had turbulence on the flight, did you – how did your other family members react, and did you have to deal with that in any special way?

*Speaker:* No. Luckily, my husband was fine. He was actually sleeping. My son didn’t even react. He just – I think when we hit a bump, he went “Whee.” So, he didn’t – everyone was okay.

*Listener:* That’s cool. That’s cool. Definitely. Next question that comes up: you mentioned having booked your vacation – was it a vacation package through Expedia?

*Speaker:* Yes. We booked it through Expedia. It was an all-inclusive package. So, it included the hotel, the airfare, the taxes, the transfers to and from the airport when you arrive, all the food. So, yeah.

*Listener:* Wow, that sounds pretty cool. Can you tell me about how you came to make that decision, or anything more about that entire experience?

*Speaker:* We’ve looked through Expedia before when we’ve gone to different islands. I feel like you do get a better package deal when you book everything together. So, that’s why I decided to go through them.

*Listener:* It basically simplified your entire vacation?

*Speaker:* Yes. It’s like one-stop shopping, basically.

*Listener:* Okay, interesting. I’ve actually never done that before. I can understand making that choice, though. When you were flying, did you have any experience with bad weather or other issues during the –

*Speaker:* No, the weather was good, luckily.

*Listener:* Oh, that’s cool. That’s cool.

*Speaker:* Yeah, we were lucky for that.

*Listener:* Trying to think of – how about if you go ahead and you can tell me more about any part of the airport experience, whether it was in New Jersey, or whether it was in the Dominican Republic; or, on your return flight if you have other stories if you want to tell me?

*Speaker:* The return flight – you know, the airport in the Dominican Republic is very, very, very small. I think they have like maybe like eight terminals in the whole airport. It’s also – you know, you’re outside, basically.

*Listener:* Oh, I know what you mean.

*Speaker:* Yeah, yeah, so it’s very – very – like a very island feel to it. So, we were just kind of hanging out when we checked in to go home from the Dominican Republic. So, they have a few little restaurants, so we got a bite to eat. We got to that airport three hours early to go home. So, they picked us up from our hotel – Expedia – to go to the Dominican Republic airport. We were there three hours early. The airport again – it’s very small, so check-in was very – we waited maybe five minutes at check-in in the Dominican Republic at the hotel the day before. I did the same thing. I checked in online, and I paid for my luggage online. We had the Wi-Fi available to us at the hotel, so I was able to do the same thing. This time, there was the same thing – the self-check-in kiosk, which I was able to do without a problem. But, the girl was real nice. She’s like, “Oh, let me know if you need any help.” I’m like, oh, now they want to ask me if I need help.

*Listener:* New Jersey and the Dominican Republic are a little different.

*Speaker:* There it was like so much more friendly, and they’re still more relaxed down there. It’s like, I’d love to move there. It’s a whole different world. It really is. So, you know, she was so nice. We were in and out of therein a breeze. We checked the luggage. We went over to security. You don’t even take your shoes off there. So I’m like – I said, God, do they even – I’m thinking to myself, “My God, I hope we’re safe. Do they even check to see if anyone has weapons?” Which I know they do, but it’s just very more relaxed. They saw me with the stroller, and they said, “Here, come this way.” So they had a whole separate gate for me to go in with the stroller. So they were much more accommodating than in the United States.

*Listener:* Tell me more about what that security was like. I mean, did you have bins and anything?

*Speaker:* Yes, they still had bins, but they let the stroller go through the detector, which I couldn’t believe. They – he was sleeping, actually, in the stroller. They were very, very friendly. They just pushed him through for me. They checked him like that. We still hadn’t emptied the bins out, put everything in – just so much more accommodating. So, we went through, we had plenty of time to kill. We were just sitting around. We boarded on the time that we were supposed to board. We took off on the time. It was really just like smooth sailing. Everything that you would like – I said “Wow, this is great. I wish it was like this coming down.” Now we’re going home; I’m not in a rush. Why couldn’t we get down as quick the first time. But the plane ride – he slept – the baby – about two and a half hours in the plane, which was great. I was able to just relax. Knowing the whole TV situation, I purchased a couple magazines to read, so I really just relaxed. The same thing – they came around with the drinks. If you want to buy food – the same prices, which we did not do. We really just had a good flight. There was no turbulence. We landed exactly on time. Getting off the plane – the same frustrations with the luggage and just trying to juggle everything. When we got off, though, the stroller was waiting for us this time, so that was great. The only thing is, the hardest part was – when we landed in Newark, getting over to customs – it was such a long walk. I just felt like we weren’t ever gonna get there. And then, we were upstairs. We had to go downstairs, so we had to actually find an elevator because of the stroller. Then, we had to find another elevator. There was actually two sets of elevators we had to go through. Then, the line to get through customs in the United States – back in New Jersey – we waited an hour. So, that was just like – we were like, “This is the end of our vacation. We’re back in New Jersey, and now we have to wait on this hour line.” It makes you made –

*Listener:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that experience. It’s not something I control or anything –

*Speaker:* Right, no, no. They have plenty of people working. It just is a lot of people travelling. I mean, which I understand, but you know, so just getting through customs. Then you get – then we get – you know, for our luggage, which I’m like, “Why isn’t the luggage here already? We went through customs. We waited an hour.” You would think the luggage would be there.

*Listener:* Oh, when you went to the baggage claim, it still wasn’t out?

*Speaker:* Yes, yes. No, it was not out yet. So, I could not – I just – still can’t get that through my head why. I just – I don’t get it. I just – I don’t understand. But, finally, we got our luggage. Then, you have to go through like another security checkpoint once you have your luggage, which I don’t understand. You already went through security. They would call out certain people – like, certain people they’d pull to the side, I guess random security checks. So, once we got out of there, I called to the shuttle service. I told them we have our luggage, and they said, “Okay, we’ll meet you outside at door number two.” So, they came very quickly, and then we were back at the garage, got our car, and back to reality.

*Listener:* With the shuttle service, you had arranged that all ahead of time?

*Speaker:* Yes, we arranged that ahead of time.

*Listener:* Okay. What did you do while you were waiting for your luggage in New Jersey?

*Speaker:* I made phone calls to family, to friends, to let them know – you know, we’re home, we had a great time, we’ll catch up with you more later.

*Listener:* Yeah, yeah. When you were exiting the plane – I’m picturing the way you said “we were juggling bags.” You had, what? Two pieces of carry-on, and then your child and everything?

*Speaker:* Yes, and the stroller. So, my husband calls us – you ever see the Chevy Chase movie – the *Family Vacation*? He calls us the Griswold family. Everything’s full. He’s like carrying most of it, too. He’s like, you know, “I’m the big schmuck over here.” So, yeah, it is funny.

*Listener:* I do know the Griswolds, yes.

*Speaker:* Yeah, the Griswolds, yeah, yeah. Wally World, we always say. We’re at Wally World Family Vacation. But – I just don’t think – you know what it is? Traveling is never gonna be easy. You’re always gonna have to deal with delays. You’re always have to gonna deal with something not going smoothly. It’s not easy. And then you’ve gotta come home, and I’m still doing laundry. So, it’s just – I guess it’s all part of the experience.

*Listener:* Yeah, and then coming home, it’s part of transitioning back to what –

*Speaker:* Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know.

*Listener:* Trying to think if there’s anything – I mean, there are certain – can you think of any story about your experience – whether it’s in the airport or transportation between any story that comes to mind that you haven’t touched on yet?

*Speaker:* No, I don’t think –

*Listener:* Whether – it could be something wonderful or something that was annoying – whatever.

*Speaker:* I think the most annoying thing was when I landed in the Dominican Republic, and they charge you a fee. I mean, that’s – you know, a scam.

*Listener:* It wasn’t an expected thing?

*Speaker:* No, no, no, no, no.

*Listener:* I can – there are airports that have exit fees, too, which was what I’m more familiar with.

*Speaker:* Okay, okay. Yeah. So – yeah, that was a big shock. I guess just the way – on the plane, they don’t really do anything to go out of the way for you anymore. With the buying the food, the no pillows, the no – I’m surprised they gave us headphones, ‘cause I know sometimes I’ve had to pay for headphones. So I just – I don’t know, I feel like you’re paying a good amount of money that you would – I don’t know, like something \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in return.

*Listener:* Right, right. If I remember correctly, you mentioned how they had food for purchase, and you opted to not do that. Could you tell me more about that? About why?

*Speaker:* Well, we ate on the plane. I mean, we ate right before had breakfast, and we purposefully packed snacks and stuff, ‘cause we know – I knew ahead of time that you have to pay for food. Again, I just – I feel like they got so much money out of me; they’re not getting another penny.

*Listener:* Yes, I understand. I sense you’re someone who hasn’t flown very much in the last several years. Can you tell me something about how you knew that you’re supposed to check in ahead of time, and how you knew some of the key stuff even before you got to the airport?

*Speaker:* Oh, my parents fly a lot – like, all the time. So, they told me a lot. They helped me along with it. They travel probably four times a year. They told me exactly what to do.

*Listener:* In some ways, you knew what to expect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ air travel?

*Speaker:* Yes, exactly.

*Listener:* What kind of things did they tell you specifically? You know, things that they thought that you would dislike or would surprise you? What did they tell you?

*Speaker:* You know, to make sure to give myself plenty of time to check in, that security lines could be long. Try to carry on if you can, certain bags, so you don’t have to pay. And again, the online check-in.

*Listener:* So you knew to anticipate a fee for the bag that you would check.

*Speaker:* Yes, yes. And they told me, too – my dad told me: you can go online and actually put in what airport you’re travelling from and to, and it will tell you how much it’s gonna be.

*Listener:* I gotcha. I gotcha. And, what’s going through your mind when your parents are telling you these things? Were there things that surprised you?

*Speaker:* I said, “Wow,” I said, “Times have really changed.” I said, “Wow, things are a lot different now.”

*Listener:* What – when you booked on Expedia – I know you said that you had done it before. What – basically, it was the past experience that made you choose that, and what sorts of things were included in it?

*Speaker:* Well, they include all your food, all your drinks, all your activities. The taxes, the transfers to and from the airport. So, pretty much everything. The tips are included also at the hotel.

*Listener:* When you were –

*Speaker:* Pretty much everything –

*Listener:* I’m guessing when you were able to check in that baggage fee calculation, that was not through Expedia, right? Was that?

*Speaker:* No, that was through United – the United website.

*Listener:* Okay, okay. I think I know what you mean. I’ve not actually used it before. And you know what, I’m kind of wondering why Expedia didn’t include that entry fee for Dominican Republic, or warn you about it. Kind of interesting.

*Speaker:* I’ve \_\_\_\_\_\_ as well.

*Listener:* You know, the $10.00 dollars per person.

*Speaker:* I think they should’ve definitely put it in there.

*Listener:* Oops, did I lose you?

*Speaker:* Oh, I’m sorry. Did I lose you? Hello? Hello?

*Listener:* I just wanted to make sure you were still there.

*Speaker:* Oh, okay. Yes, I’m still here. Yes, I totally agree that Expedia should’ve told me that in advance.

*Listener:* Interesting, interesting. Well, is there anything else that you can think of that you want to share with me that made it kind of an interesting experience, or you found particular interesting, or strange about any of your air travel?

*Speaker:* No, I think I covered everything.

*Listener:* It’s been a great conversation. You’ve given me some really terrific stories. We like stories with a lot of rich detail. We appreciate your time. You can’t even begin to imagine how much we do. I’m gonna send you – probably within the next ten days or so – an Amazon gift card – a $50.00 dollar Amazon gift card. It’ll come via e-mail.

*Speaker:* Okay.

*Listener:* And after – let’s say about ten days or so – it shouldn’t be a problem. You should have it. But, once in a while, we have a little trouble, so you can just let us know at the e-mail – at the person who was the last contact for you.

*Speaker:* Okay, all right.

*Listener:* And, [name], I hope you have a terrific day.

*Speaker:* Thank you so much. Take care now.

*Listener:* You too. Bye bye.

*Speaker:* Bye bye.

*[End of Audio]*