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Flight makes emergency landing after wife secret discovers husband cheating on her

For many, the design and release of "Touch ID" • , a feature on all iPhones since 2013's iPhone 5S,[1] has changed the way we access our phones and protect the private information contained on them. Rather than requiring a code, Touch ID allows phone users to unlock their device[2] by holding their fingerprint over a touch-sensitive button.

Passengers on Qantas flight QR-972 from Doha to Bali may now dispute the apparent advantages[3] of such instant access, after an argument between a husband and wife caused the pilot to make an emergency landing in Chennai on Sunday, 5 November. The wife, who was allegedly intoxicated, used her sleeping husband's fingerprint to unlock his phone and discovered incriminating messages in his inbox.

She apparently became aggressive with the cabin crew who sought to calm her down after she repeatedly hit and shouted at her husband. The husband and wife and their young child were escorted off of the aircraft by the authorities at Chennai and placed in a holding room before the wife sobered up.

No criminal charges were made and the family later caught a flight to Doha from Kuala Lumpur. A Central Industrial Security Force official in India said that:

"On November 5, at about 10 am, Qatar Airways flight QR-962 (Doha-Bali) was diverted to Chennai. A lady along with her husband and a child, all Iranian nationals, were offloaded by

Qatar Airline[s] as the lady passenger (who was intoxicated) misbehaved with crew members inflight. They were sent to Kuala Lumpur by Batik Air flight 6019 for further travel to Doha".

The moral of the story

The events stand as a useful reminder of the willingness of airlines to divert flights in the interests of safety. The onboard safety of passengers is a paramount concern for cabin crew and the cockpit, and passengers can quickly find themselves in the hands of foreign authorities for what happens in the sky. Although there was apparently no criminal activity on which to prosecute, this could easily have been different if the argument had continued to escalate.

The story comes after reports the week before that two people were arrested after being caught carrying out a sexual act in full view of other passengers on a Delta airlines flight from Los Angeles to Detroit. The pair, who were strangers before meeting on the flight, were recorded by a fellow passenger. It later emerged that the man had a pregnant fiancée at home.

The ease with which the wife was able to check her husband's personal messages raises broader questions concerning the safety of the Touch ID feature. This is particularly important since banking applications increasingly allow access to banking facilities, including the making of withdrawals and payments, with a mere fingerprint. Online purchases can also be made with fingerprints via Apple Pay and Paypal. P.I.N., come back; all is forgiven. Bye biometrics.

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[1] With the exception of the 2017 iPhone X.

[2] The feature can also be used to purchase applications and access online banking facilities.

[3] On 4 September 2013, Wells Fargo analyst Maynard Um predicted that a fingerprint sensor in the iPhone 5S would help mobile commerce and boost adoption in the corporate environment: <http://appleinsider.com/articles/13/09/04/fingerprint-sensor-in-apples-iphone-5s-predicted-to-boost-mobile-commerce-enterprise-adoption>.

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