

Chinese musician kicked off American Airlines flight because of cello

by EJ Ward | Aug 06, 2018 18:39 | TRAVEL MUSIC 30-50



Hu Jingjing's cello caused its owner a great deal of travel disruption last Thursday. *Jingjing Hu | Jingjing Hu/Twitter*

A Chinese student was kicked off an American Airlines flight on August 2 because her cello was too large, even though she had paid for it to have its own seat.

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A Chinese student was kicked off an American Airlines flight on August 2 because her cello was too large, even though she had paid for it to have its own seat.

Hu Jingjing, a student at DePaul University School of Music, had traveled to Miami to take part in a music festival, and was attempting to return home with her US\$30,000 cello.

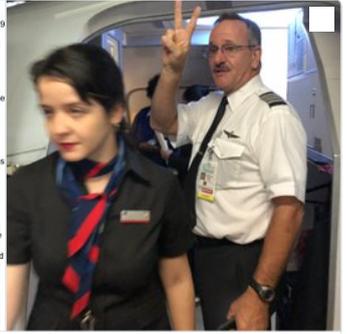
The instrument means so much to her she made sure it had its own seat. Speaking to **NBC**, Hu said: "Maybe I'm exaggerating, but it's my life".

Writing on Facebook, Hu's husband, Jay Tang, said: "I purchased the trip tickets for her and her cello on April 2 on the phone directly. I told them specifically that one ticket is for the cello as cabin baggage and they told it is absolutely allowed and she won't have any problem."

However, just before the gate was about to close, Hu was told she had to get off the plane because "the aircraft is too small for the cello".

When Hu asked to see the rules regarding instruments on flights, she was given a printout that said "bass violins/fiddles" are not permitted. Hu pointed out that a cello is neither a violin nor a fiddle.

her cello on Apr 2 on the phone directly from AA and told them specifically that one ticket is for the cello as cabin baggage. I was told it is absolutely allowed and she won't have any problem. She flew from Chicago to Miami on American Airlines 335 on Jun 19 without any problem. She checked in her flight back yesterday online for both herself and the cello. Today she arrived at Miami International Airport 3 hours ahead, checked in her luggage, went through security check, and boarded the plane normally. Just before the flight attendants were about to close the gate, she was told to get off the plane because "the aircraft is too small for the cello". She was assured that she could get on the next flight to Chicago about 1 hour later. When she was turning around and leaving the plane, her cello case touched the pilot. The pilot immediately claimed that he was bleeding because of the touch, while apparently there is no blood or injury to be found. My wife then took a picture of him and he was doing the victory sign to her and said "This is why we need to get her out". Interestingly my wife was traveling with a friend, who remained on the plane. She told us that after my wife left, two other passengers came and sat in her and her cello's seats. The story does not end here. After she got off the plane and trying to find the next flight that was guaranteed, she was told that the next flight was also "too small" for the cello, and they called the police because my wife was "not being understandable". Fairly speaking no one can understand what's happening. So surrounded by three law enforcement officers, my wife was told again that either she purchase first or business class tickets out of her pocket or she could not fly back to Chicago on an American Airlines flight because of FAA regulations. So basically you either have to be rich to purchase the tickets, or just settle in Miami. I don't know how are musicians supposed to travel to comply with those "regulations". But clearly AA is just playing around with customers. They just kick off passengers when they oversell their tickets using FAA regulations as an excuse. I could have been told those regulations when purchasing the ticket. My wife could have been told those regulations when flying from Chicago to Miami, at check in counter in Miami International Airport, at the gate or even when boarding the plane. Yet they chose to kick her out last minute after she was seated and her cello safely secured. They even need law enforcement involved. What a shame. Please forward this if you can. We are so helpless when facing those giant companies. We demand American Airlines to offer my wife and her cello a flight back to Chicago, an explanation and an apology.



Jay TANG
@Mr_JaYtanG

@AmericanAir @cbschicago @abcnews @WGNNews
@FoxNews @DePaulU Please help! American Airlines kicked my wife out of the plane for some other passengers and she cannot get back

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The rules on cellos clearly state that: "A cello must be assigned window seat on a non-exit row." The rule book also states that be in any cabin".

US Federal Regulations allow passengers to carry large instrument cellos in the cabin providing they buy an extra ticket. Further, the musician had no problems travelling from Chicago to Miami.

American Airlines said in a statement there was a "miscommunication" about whether the cello met the requirements to fit onboard the aircraft. American Airlines went on to say that Hu was rebooked on a later American Airlines flight, the following morning.

Hu Jingjing eventually arrived in Chicago, but says she is not supposed to fly with her cello again.



EJ Ward

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