

**EPISODE 175**

**[00:00:08] IP:** Hello, and welcome to episode 175 of AvTalk. I am Ian Petchenik here, as always, with –

**[00:00:16] JR:** Jason Rabinowitz. And this is going to be the sleepy episode, because it turns out, not a whole lot happened in the last week.

**[00:00:23] IP:** No, it's been a pretty quiet week as far as aviation news and happenings, I guess. It has not been a quiet week, as far as I am concerned. I must admit.

**[00:00:38] JR:** Well, you had one big event, which we'll get to. But other than that, hardly anything has happened. And I'm not sure that's a bad thing.

**[00:00:47] IP:** No, August things are supposed to be quiet. I'm thankful for it. I was ready to keep my head down for the month. But alas, events outside of my control have brought me to the forefront of what could surely be described as a giant mess.

**[00:01:07] JR:** Yeah, I think that's an accurate description.

**[00:01:09] IP:** So, yeah, we're not going to dwell on this a lot. But I will say that this is the first time that a single flight has disrupted the Flightradio24 services for such an extended period of time. What happened was, is the US Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi is currently visiting a variety of Asian countries and meeting with leaders there. And there was a lot of will she? Won't she? About a visit to Taipei, Taiwan.

And the flight departed Kuala Lumpur. Headed east. Then made a left turn north. And the traffic was such that we experienced instability on the platform. We had to implement the waiting room feature, which is basically a queue to access the site and under some crushing loads.

Just real quick figures, 708,000 people were following the flight as it landed. So, that's the most that I've ever followed a flight at a single one-time. Over the course of the flight, nearly 3 million people followed at least a portion of it. And there were almost 10 million clicks on that flight

alone. It was a busy day. Lots of learnings going on about dealing with that kind of sustained load. We've done a lot of work dealing with spikes and making sure that the site stays healthy when we have very, very large, but not necessarily sustained spikes. This was a seven-hour flight. And as the flight went on, it only attracted more and more attention. Some lessons learned and some more work for our infrastructure team. So that the next time something like this happens, it doesn't happen.

**[00:02:59] JR:** Yeah, a very boring 737 flight. Yet probably the least boring 737 flight at the same time. Nothing happened. But it sure was interesting.

**[00:03:10] IP:** Yes. And the flight arrived in Taiwan. The aircraft has since left Taiwan. They, I believe, are in South Korea now. Japan next. And then back to the US. Hopefully, the site maintains itself. It doesn't look like we're going to see that heavy load in the next couple flights that we're expecting to see. But we're definitely monitoring things much more closely anytime that particular aircraft is in the air.

Let's go to some breaking news. On Wednesday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, Reuters is reporting that the Acting Administrator of the FAA, Billy Nolen, will visit the Charleston, South Carolina factory, Boeing's Charleston, South Carolina factory, on Thursday. So, a day before the podcast comes out. To discuss whether or not Boeing is truly ready to begin delivering 787s. Reuters last week reported on Friday, I believe, that the FAA had approved Boeing's rework, inspection and modification plan to resume the 787 deliveries.

So, the FAA says that the acting administrator's visit to Charleston is “To ensure that the FAA is satisfied that Boeing has taken the appropriate steps to improve manufacturing quality and to guarantee the autonomy of workers who ensure regulatory compliance on the company's assembly lines.” So, this goes back to whistleblower claims and claims by other Boeing employees that there was a lot of pressure on the employees who were certified to ensure compliance with FAA regulations regarding the manufacturing of these aircrafts by Boeing management.

So, the FAA said, “Well, you're going to need to have a plan in place to make sure that doesn't happen.” The FAA's acting administrator is going to go down to Charleston to make sure that

they did that. Obviously, this feels more publicity related if he's traveling. But I guess as long as they get it done and get the sign off, 787 deliveries should resume relatively soon.

**[00:05:18] JR:** Fingers crossed. It's a shame that it will be happening after the busiest summer not ever, because we're only still running at like 85% capacity. But seemingly, the most hectic summer travel season in recent history. Every airline could have used those 787s. But at this point, no one's going to complain about finally being able to take delivery of these aircrafts.

**[00:05:40] IP:** Yeah. We should see delivery of the 787s most likely relatively soon. And it'll be interesting to see which airline gets theirs first. Jason, do you have any predictions or care to make a wager on which airline gets their 787 first?

**[00:05:56] JR:** I would say it's going to be American. I feel like they keep going on and on about how delivery is going to happen any moment. And they've got a couple of them very much ready to go. And I think even the registration is on them. I'm not quite sure. But I feel like they've been very optimistic that there's will be first.

**[00:06:14] IP:** I was going to say American. So, I will instead say Lufthansa.

**[00:06:18] JR:** Okay, I think that one is also painted and ready to go. I think it's even named Hamburg. One of those – Who are those originally supposed to go to? These weren't the ones that Lufthansa originally ordered, right?

**[00:06:29] IP:** No. The first ones they're going to take delivery, I think they're – Are they Hainan?

**[00:06:33] JR:** Yeah, sounds right.

**[00:06:35] IP:** We'll double check that. But nonetheless, 787 deliveries seemingly coming in the near future. I would be very surprised at this point if we didn't see 787 deliveries by the end of this month.

**[00:06:48] JR:** You know what else you'd be very surprised about?

**[00:06:50] IP:** What would I be surprised about, Jason?

**[00:06:51] JR:** If Airbus canceled everything that Qatar had on order, including all 19 of its on order A350s in the ever escalating back and forth between Qatar and Airbus regarding their little paint issue and grounding.

**[00:07:07] IP:** That would surprise me. And yet it happened.

**[00:07:10] JR:** Apparently it happened. This is not been confirmed by either Airbus or Qatar. But it has been reported that Airbus has once again unilaterally canceled pretty much everything Qatar has had on order. All of the A320 family aircraft have been scrapped. And now, we've seen incrementally more and more A350s. One here, two there. But now it seems like the entire order book for Qatar has been cancelled.

**[00:07:36] IP:** This whole thing is just incredible to me, that Qatar was formerly one of, if not Airbus' best customer, then certainly far up the list.

**[00:07:52] JR:** Oh, yeah. I mean, they operated pretty much every Airbus type. Not every sub-variant. But they operated the 320, the 330, the 340, the 350, the 380. I mean – And even A330 freighter. So, they pretty much operated everything that Airbus had to offer.

**[00:08:07] IP:** And were the launch customer for multiple Airbus aircraft.

**[00:08:10] JR:** Including the A350.

**[00:08:11] IP:** The A350. And so, to have it come to this, I mean, it's so incredible to me to see such a public falling out between two companies that had previously been so close. It's just incredible.

**[00:08:26] JR:** Yep. Doesn't seem to me coming to any sort of conclusion anytime soon.

**[00:08:30] IP:** I'm sure we'll have more information the next time both parties have to make a court filing, because that's seemingly when we get kind of an escalatory update. Yes, the juicy bits. Yeah, I guess we wait and see this. This is a bizarre one.

**[00:08:46] JR:** Still trying to figure out what happened here. And no matter how many times I read this story, it doesn't check out.

**[00:08:53] IP:** So, a CASA C-212 aircraft being operated by a pair of pilots performing flights for parachute jump practices. And the aircraft is in a bad state after a hard landing. And they manage a go around, and they're flying and trying to figure out what to do. And this is in North Carolina, by the way. And the decision is taken to go up to Raleigh. They were down just a bit south of Fayetteville. They take the decision to head up to Raleigh. And they are going to attempt an emergency landing there. The right main landing gear has been damaged. The pilots decide that they're going to head up to Raleigh to make an emergency landing there. And on the way, the pilot in command and the pilot flying radios air traffic control to say that the other pilot exited the aircraft.

**[00:10:03] JR:** Exited how?

**[00:10:05] IP:** Just left. Jumped out of the plane without any parachute.

**[00:10:11] JR:** Okay. You shouldn't do that.

**[00:10:13] IP:** No. And so, the pilot calls and he says to the air traffic controllers, "My pilot just jumped out." And the guy didn't have a parachute. He didn't have an arresting mechanism of any kind. The aircraft landed at Raleigh, skidded off the runway. The pilot who landed the aircraft was not severely injured. The NTSB is investigating. They recovered the body of the other pilot near the airport. And the whole situation is absolutely bizarre.

And so, authorities are trying to figure out a variety of things. First of all, what happened to the aircraft that led to the initial hard landing? Then, why did the other pilot jump out of the plane without a parachute or exit the aircraft? And we don't know the manner with which he exited the

aircraft. But we know that he left the aircraft when he wasn't in a position to do so inland safely. And then the aircraft eventually safely landed at RDU in Raleigh.

A variety of questions stacked on top of one another. The NTSB is investigating. And hopefully, they will get to the bottom of this with the flight data recorder. I think the cockpit voice recorder is again going to be the most critical component of this particular puzzle, trying to find out what was going on in the aircraft when they're not communicating over the radio. Trying to figure that one out. But just a bizarre, bizarre situation.

**[00:11:48] JR:** I don't know if we'll ever get a story on this podcast more bizarre than that last one.

**[00:11:53] IP:** I hope not. Because I can't even imagine how you would get stranger than that. But this is one that we're going to be following very closely, because it's a puzzle with a bunch of different pieces. And none of those pieces seem to be from the same puzzle. So just so strange, and definitely going to keep following that one.

Jason, let's take a quick break. And when we come back, we're going to talk with Seth Miller from PaxEx.Aero, because the Department of Transportation is proposing some changes to how airlines deal with changes to passengers itineraries and the money that they then owe those passengers. Stick with us. We'll be back in just a second.

**[00:12:38] IP:** Welcome back, we are once again joined by Seth Miller, aerospace journalists with PaxEx.Aero. Seth is here to talk to us about some possible changes coming to folks booking tickets in the US.

**[00:12:54] JR:** Not just changes. Good changes.

**[00:12:56] IP:** We'll get there. But changes nonetheless. Seth, welcome back.

**[00:13:00] SM:** Thanks so much for having me guys.

**[00:13:01] IP:** So, okay, Jason jumped the gun. These are good changes.

**[00:13:06] JR:** You have to specify. Good changes are just so rare these days.

**[00:13:09] IP:** That's right. The Department of Transportation is proposing using my favorite regulatory tool, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. These are the rules. We want to make these rules. And these rules would do what?

**[00:13:26] SM:** Mostly good things for passengers. The short version is if an airline cancels your flight, or changes your schedule, what you've booked significantly, and that is a specific word with new definitions, they would be required to give you a cash refund rather than a voucher. That's good news for most passengers. On top of that, there's two very specific health related regulations or proposed regulations that come into play. One is that in the case of a declared health emergency, if you cannot travel because of, say, border closures, or new regulations, or because you happen to be ill, or potentially ill and could put others at risk from traveling, the airlines are required to give you a non-expiring voucher for the full value of your ticket.

**[00:14:11] JR:** Well, that's a nice change.

**[00:14:13] SM:** And if the airlines have also received significant funds from a government, they're require to give you your money back, not just a voucher.

**[00:14:22] JR:** This was a particularly contentious point of debate early on in the COVID pandemic, where there were a few airlines. Notably, I think, Frontier, who not only were they issuing credits for use only on Frontier in the future. Not only were they expiring credits, but they had to be used in like 90 days or something like that.

**[00:14:40] SM:** Yeah, Spirit Airlines is the same way. Actually, it reminds me I need to call them and complain because I had a voucher from a canceled flight. But then I booked something and then they canceled my flight and said that I only get the same 90-day voucher. I was like, "Ah-ah. You guys canceled this time. Not my fault." And we're having words. But anyway, mostly polite so far, at least.

What's super interesting by health related stuff is the clause says that a note from the doctor is acceptable, but also that a passenger who makes their own determination consistent with public health guidance issued by the CDC, comparable agencies in other countries, or the World Health Organization, that they are at risk, can just say, "Hi, I'm at risk, I can't travel." And get a voucher back. Now, that's obviously ripe for abuse and has some potential challenges. We'll see how that part goes.

**[00:15:30] IP:** Let's back up for a second and talk about what are passengers owed now by airlines in the US? And then once we talked about that, I want to kind of expand this to how does this compare to elsewhere?

**[00:15:42] SM:** Yeah, you get nothing and you'll like it I believe it's the line from Caddyshack.

**[00:15:47] JR:** It's more true than it's not.

**[00:15:49] SM:** Yeah, I'm switching movies there, I know. I did do both. Child of the 80s. It is more true than you think. The DoT does have – And actually post-911 issued guidance related to that massive downturn in business that basically said, "Yeah, airlines, we get it, you're struggling here. But the passengers need their money back. You'd canceled or change their flights, you really probably should give them their money." But it was like you really probably should. Not you are legally obligated to. And to do so in a timely manner.

And so, the big change here, and from the DoT's perspective, it's actually not that big a change, because they've always sort of required. It is that they are now codifying this rule and saying, "This is real. You must do it. And you must do it in a timely manner." And it's seven days back to the credit card company or 20 days to cut a check, which sort of those rules have been around for a long time as well since 911. That part of it makes a lot of sense. The other thing that they are doing is actually defining what a canceled flight is, or what a significant schedule change is. Because, historically, it has been sort of up to the airline to decide if it's significant or not, or if it's canceled or not somehow.

**[00:16:53] IP:** And so, if the airline decides that significant means, “Well, we got you there the same day, or on the next available flight,” which these days might not be for a few days, they're saying, “Hey, we still got you there.”

**[00:17:07] SM:** Correct. And what's interesting and sort of hard to tell from reading the documentation is a lot of this seems focused on changes to schedules that happen in advance. And you want to talk a little bit about other countries. EU261 is sort of the gold standard for – From a passenger perspective at least, of what happens when things go wrong, right? If you get downgraded, there's specific compensation required. If your flight is canceled within 14 days of booking, there's specific rules of compensation in addition to our refund. If there's delays, you're entitled to a refund.

It's not clear that this would really count for just a random delayed flight. And certainly not a random delayed flight that also gets there and gets you paid, which is what the EU rules require. This is a pretty poor version of that if we're scoring it on that metric. But it's way better than anything the DoD had had previously. And I'll put an asterisk on that and come back in a second.

**[00:18:04] JR:** They did lay out some specific items here so that a significant change for domestic trip is anything more than three hours prior to or after the arrival time. And that increases to six hours for an international trip. But there's also some other particularities that are quite interesting, specifically, and like you said, how schedules are kind of all out of whack right now. But if they change your arrival or departure airport, even if it's the same metro area, that now counts.

If an airline changes your flight from JFK to LaGuardia, that now counts as a significant change. If they add a connection to your trip, so if they eliminate a nonstop flight, which is also ramping in the schedule these days, that now counts as a significant change. And there were two more that you listed, Seth, that I wanted to talk about in particular, because they're a bit more of an open question, aren't they?

**[00:18:51] SM:** They are. And so, downgrade to class of service. I actually think that one's pretty straightforward. The real question is, can extra legroom be considered? Economy plus?

Main cabin extra? Comfort plus? Nicest on breeze? Who else am I missing? Even more space on JetBlue? I love that they have fun marketing terms for these. If you booked one of those and end up in a regular seat instead.

**[00:19:15] JR:** Technically not a drop in cabin class.

**[00:19:15] SM:** Unless you're on delta, which sells comfort plus as premium economy domestically. It's a different fare class. It's a different booking class. It is different. United is getting into the weeds on that and has some fares that explicitly are called out for economy plus sales, but only through some channels. And it's super confusing. And I'm still trying to get to the bottom of that one.

But yes, you're right. Generally, that wouldn't qualify obviously from business class to coach would. You could argue flatbed to not flatbed on a Transcon domestic should qualify. But it's unclear that it would since both are considered the sort of forward premium cabin. And that's also a pretty rare downgrade when it happens. But it also raises the question of what exactly is “significant downgrade of the available amenities and travel experiences”, which is the other thing, because a change of aircraft type is now considered potentially justification for a refund like that.

**[00:20:14] JR:** Yeah, this one is a huge open question. And it's super subjective. Downgrade of the available amenities, that's really subjective and hard to measure. You can measure it. And in fact, I spent pretty much my entire day measuring that in my actual day job. But then it goes on to say and travel experiences. The heck does that even mean?

**[00:20:35] IP:** Great question.

**[00:20:35] SM:** One of the things to remember is that, historically, airlines included a change of operating carrier clause in their contract of carriage, which meant if you were booked on American Airlines and they moved you to a BA flight, British Airways, right? As a code share, or something like that, that theoretically would entitle you to cancel and refund or rebooking. What's interesting is that also technically would apply to change of operating carrier by regional partner. Maybe you're booked on –

**[00:21:08] JR:** Oh, and that happens a lot. Yeah.

**[00:21:09] SM:** It happens a lot. And in most cases, it was by those who felt so compelled was an interesting loophole that people could use to get out of non-refundable tickets, even if nothing else really changed, right? “Oh, I don't want to fly. I only booked it because it was on an Embraer 170 or CR7. And now it's on a 50-seater. And I don't want to fly on that.” And because that meant a switch from Envoy to Piedmont, I could get out of it. Or something like that. That's has been used in the past. That loophole sort of closes. I did mention the asterisk earlier. The airlines get a super huge loophole that they get to exploit on this.

**[00:21:44] IP:** Go on.

**[00:21:45] JR:** Tell us more.

**[00:21:47] SM:** The airlines are allowed to charge a fee for the processes of said refund or issuance of voucher.

**[00:21:53] JR:** Yeah, this was going to be the next thing I brought up, that it's not all good news, because this is probably the most ambiguous and most objectionable part of the rule.

**[00:22:03] SM:** It's not ambiguous at all, Jason. It's quite explicit. The airlines can say there's a \$500 fee to get your refund.

**[00:22:07] JR:** So, we're going right back to the old pre-COVID days where you couldn't make a change or cancel a flight without a fee that could very well be way more than the ticket was actually worth.

**[00:22:16] SM:** Yeah, I am hopeful that the DoT will – The problem is I don't think the DoT is going to be in a position to dictate what the fees are. I'm hopeful that they'll receive enough comments that suggests that this is a terrible plan to allow the fees to be charged because the airlines will use it to abuse the situation and mute the value of this rule.

But one of the interesting things that the NPRM includes is a calculation of how much processing all these refunds would cost the airlines. So, we know how much the DoT estimates that – Well, actually each of these requests cost. It's less than \$2.50. It's about two and a quarter.

**[00:22:55] IP:** So then, theoretically, depending on the comments they get and whether or not they scrapped the thing, if they go in with this language where you can charge refund, you could then have – I mean, and this puts all of the onus back on people who are seeking refunds. You have enough formal complaints to the DoT that says, “Okay, we know that these things should only cost X. This seems against –

**[00:23:18] SM:** Certainly against the spirit.

**[00:23:19] IP:** The spirit or the regulation. And then we can do something about it. Unfortunately, that seems like the way things would go.

**[00:23:27] SM:** Yeah. And the airlines have objected to rules like this basically saying, “Let the free market speak. Competition is more important. Fares are cheaper because we have this non-refundable option so more people can have that opportunity.” The DoT is basically saying, “We know that people are traveling even when they shouldn't, because they feel that they're going to lose their money.” And that is not in the public interest. And public interest is sort of a term of art that the DoT uses on a lot of things because their goal is to protect the public interest, theoretically. That's definitely their goal. How well it do it as a theory.

The public interest argument is being made. And the DoT explicitly does say, “We recognize that the airlines have argued in favor of non-refundable fares for a reason.” We don't think the public interest is properly being served by not allowing – Or not requiring refunds on these cases where passengers are traveling and getting other people sick.

Yeah, the other interesting thing about it is they're actually using the no smoking rule as their justification. The airline – Back in the day, if you're old enough, you may remember this. The no smoking section was like the left side of the plane versus the right at one point.

**[00:24:36] JR:** Scientifically proven. Definitely works.

**[00:24:38] IP:** As you remember, there being a curtain involved.

**[00:24:41] SM:** Yeah. There'd be a curtain in the back sometimes. Or like the last row of business class was non-smoking. And the first row of coach wasn't, right? There's some crazy – Anyway, the DoT eventually came down and said, “The science says if we can't keep the air clean around you, that's not reasonable. And so, we're going to require this, like, non-smoking.” They're now basically saying passengers who expect the risk or anticipate the risk or are actually subjected to the risk of unknown particles in the air need to be protected. And they're doing the same thing around respiratory illnesses and, obviously, COVID. But potentially, other health emergencies at some point in the future. That's another really interesting caveat, especially considering how much time and energy the airlines have spent convincing the world that HEPA filters on board are sufficient to keep the air clean.

**[00:25:30] IP:** And that's the topic of a whole another episode. This is a notice of proposed rulemaking. What is the timeframe for comments, questions, complaints, criticisms, and then the DoT actually act on this?

**[00:25:46] SM:** For starters, it hasn't actually been published yet. We've got to work through that. It is proposed to be published, and that it made it into the docket, I believe. It has to get published in the Federal Register. There will be 90 days for comments to be published, assuming to be filed. And there'll be a website you can go – That's [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). But there's a way you can file online. You can also hand deliver or courier documents.

**[00:26:10] IP:** That's usually how I do it.

**[00:26:11] SM:** Yeah, Washington Avenue, or to – Yup, New Jersey Avenue Southeast, the DoT headquarters. You can fax them if you're into that sort of thing. But there's 90 days of comments. And then the DoT, I assume, is going to get a lot of comments. Obviously, the usual suspects from the airlines and whatnot. But this is one of those that will likely have a lot of comments from the public. I hope it does. I might actually finally get around to writing one and even share a template of some thoughts I have.

But after that, then the DoT gets to decide. Makes its decision of what the final ruling will be assuming it is remotely close to what we're seeing in the proposed. I imagine the airlines might protest a little more. But none of this is going to take effect before the end of this year certainly. Early '23 at the earliest.

**[00:26:52] IP:** And when all of this does come to pass, I'm sure we'll be talking more about this once the comments – Because all the comments are eventually made public.

**[00:27:00] SM:** Yes.

**[00:27:01] IP:** And those comments often fall into three categories that kind of in my reading of many of them. One, you have the comments that are learned, very deeply researched, and are basically legal briefs. You have the comments from the folks who have a vested interest in it. Say, like, Seth, or Jason, or myself, where we kind of know what we're talking about. But we're not lawyers, and we haven't hired one to write the comment.

And then there's the third group, which I really enjoy the most, because those comments are often tangentially related to reality at best and just make for some very interesting reading. I'm looking forward to reading all of those.

Seth Miller, aerospace journalist from PaxEx.Aero, once again joining us this time to talk about, I guess, a very, very terrible version of EU261 that the DoT has come up with.

**[00:27:57] SM:** Absolutely God awful, but better than what we had before.

**[00:28:00] IP:** There it is.

**[00:28:00] SM:** The check's in the mail, fellas. Thanks for having me.

**[00:28:03] IP:** Thanks, Seth. We'll talk to you next time.

**[00:28:06] SM:** Bye-bye.

**[00:28:14] IP:** Welcome back. I think that Seth mentioned we're looking at next year at the earliest. And judging by the number of comments that I think we're all anticipating, it could be late next year by the time we actually see something come out. But it'll be interesting to see what the final version.

**[00:28:32] JR:** I'm already drafting up my comment.

**[00:28:34] IP:** Excellent.

**[00:28:36] IP:** Speaking of comments, the FAA wants to have your comments on aircraft seat size.

**[00:28:43] JR:** And before you start typing, I flew Spirit, and the seat wasn't very comfortable. They don't want to hear about that. That's not what this is about. Ian, tell us what it is about.

**[00:28:55] IP:** What this is about is reevaluating the minimum seat size necessary for a safe evacuation of the aircraft. The operation of aircraft is based upon a number of assumptions, some of which, at this point, are probably erroneous. Especially in the US, given the changing size and shape of the average person in the US.

**[00:29:22] JR:** Wow! What are you trying to say there? Just come out and say it. Come on.

**[00:29:26] IP:** The average person in the US is larger both in physical size and weight than they were when these regulations were first proposed. So now, you have the FAA requesting folks comment on what they think the minimum standards should be for aircraft seats. And as Jason said, they don't care whether you're comfortable or not. They care if you can get out of those seats and out of the aircraft safely and efficiently.

**[00:30:01] JR:** Yes, that's a big question since most of this is – I'm not going to say hypothetical. But it uses assumed baselines of every passenger is 175 pounds and five foot eight, and everyone is able bodied and able to get out of their feet into the island off the aircraft. As we've seen time and time again, with videos of evacuations, that is just not the case. That is

not what happens onboard these aircraft. It is long overdue that these standards are taken into a closer look and more modernized, because maybe there is no airline out there that is thinking about going down to 27 inches of pitch that nobody really does today. And maybe it isn't practically possible or safely possible to evacuate an aircraft in – What is it? 90 seconds with 27-inch seat pitch. And that's what we're going to find out.

**[00:30:54] IP:** Yes. So, those comments, we'll put a link to where you can file your comments should you wish to do so. Let's close up the show with some quick updates and things of that nature. One, BA is suspending short haul ticket sales until August 8. So, for five days, they will suspend flights out of Heathrow on short haul. This comes after, I don't know, the 250,000 other incidences of airlines suspending ticket sales or withdrawing flights or things of that nature over the last portion of the summer.

Etihad has firmed up it's A350 freighter order. This was the seven A350 freighters that they announced at the Singapore Air Show. It is now a firm order. What we don't know is if these A350 freighters are coming out of the backlog of Etihad's A350 orders. Or if this is additional. Still waiting for some clarity on that.

And finally, when you try and start up an airline to a country that is not accepting flights at the moment, you go somewhere else. Northern Pacific has applied to serve Mexico, because their initial plan of serving Japan via anchorage isn't going to work until Japan accepts tourists again. You can currently go to Japan, but you can't just go and be there. I believe at the moment it's only guided tours are allowed. So, not something where you have a bunch of people buying low cost tickets and then flying via Anchorage. So, they're going to try and serve Mexico.

**[00:32:26] JR:** Got to do something. I mean, they've got the planes. They've got the people. They probably have some airport infrastructure. They got to do something, otherwise they're going to run out of money real quick. But man, is that a big pivot? Pivoting from Japan to Mexico? I can't really think of two countries that might be more different.

**[00:32:43] IP:** Yeah. I mean, whatever works at this point.

**[00:32:46] JR:** And not that there's anything wrong with that. I mean, US to Mexico is a bottomless pit of demand. They'll make it work. But Mexico is not Japan. Famously not Japan. Yeah.

**[00:32:53] IP:** It is not last time I checked. Mexico is famously not Japan. That's a good point. And the geography lesson for this week's episode.

And on that note, this is the first episode of August. So, what was supposed to be a quiet month. And let's keep it that way. We'll be back next week with hopefully a great show in which we can talk about something, because nothing has happened once again. Hoping for smooth sailing. But until then, and in case something does happen, we'll definitely be back with that. This has been episode 175. Jason, can you believe it?

**[00:33:31] JR:** I can hardly believe it.

**[00:33:33] IP:** Excellent.

**[00:33:34] JR:** I can't think of a quieter week for 175.

**[00:33:37] IP:** 175. I am Ian Petchenik. Here, as always with –

**[00:33:41] JR:** Jason Rabinowitz. Thanks for listening.

[END]