

Selective outrage

By [David Heim](#)

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The usual Thanksgiving travel stories were spiced this year with concern about enhanced security screening at airports. While most Americans accept the screening procedure as a reasonable inconvenience that all of us have to undergo for the sake of general safety, commentators like [Kathleen Parker](#) and [Charles Krauthammer](#) seized on it as one more sign of an intrusive government intent on invading our personal space.

Of course, that story line nicely fits with the antigovernment outrage of libertarians and the Tea Party movement.

I got an email from one Christian theologian by the name of Alex McFarland. Upset by the screening methods, he wondered, "Is our country sacrificing its sense of humanity for security?"

Now that's an interesting question. But all this outrage seems awfully selective. Where was this concern for security trumping human dignity when the issue was not the rather trivial one of air travelers passing through a screening device or being patted down for explosives, but the grave one of humans being subjected to torture at the hands of the U.S. government? I wonder if the theologian worried about what he calls "dehumanizing" body scans was disturbed when the U.S. encouraged and approved of waterboarding.

As for Krauthammer, he defended the use of torture whenever a suspect is believed to have high-value information. "Under those circumstances, you do what you have to do," [he](#)

[wrote](#).

See also Julie Clawson's [post](#) on TSA screening.