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Johnny Knoxville arrested at LAX

Officials find hand grenade in MTV star's baggage.

By Larry Altman, Staff Writer
Posted: 01/15/2009 11:07:45 PM PST

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Actor Johnny Knoxville, best known for his "Jackass" television shows and movies, was arrested Thursday at Los Angeles International Airport when an inert hand grenade was discovered in his bag.

Knoxville, whose given name is John Philip Clapp, was detained by Airport Police as he was about to board a 7 a.m. American Airlines flight to Miami, LAX spokeswoman Nancy Castles said.

Knoxville, 38, of Malibu was moving through passenger security when a Transportation Security Administration officer saw the image of a hand grenade in his carry-on bag, Castles said.

Airport Police and the Los Angeles Police Department bomb squad examined the grenade and determined it contained no explosives or firing pin.

Knoxville told police the grenade was a prop from one of his photo shoots and he had forgotten it was in his bag.

He was released, but police will ask the City Attorney's Office to

charge him with possession of a prohibited item within the sterile area of an airport, a misdemeanor.

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Knoxville's arrest was the latest in a string of incidents in which people took weapons to the airport.

Markus Dance Sargent was arrested Monday when police found an antique .22-caliber long rifle in the trunk of his green Cadillac during a random security search at a checkpoint near the airport's entrance.

Sargent told police that his grandfather gave him the weapon and he had forgotten it was in the car.

On Jan. 9, airport police arrested Phillip Joseph Dominguez, 47, when they found 15 handguns, five rifles, an antique musket, and nearly 1,000 rounds of ammunition stashed in the bed of his pickup truck.

On Saturday, police questioned a man carrying two unloaded shotguns in his SUV.

Although Knoxville was caught as he went through airport security, Dominguez and Sargent were caught in random checkpoints.

Airport police Sgt. Jim Holcomb said the arrests might seem unusual, but officers made 61 arrests at checkpoints in 2008. Offenses included weapons, narcotics and fireworks possession, and drunken driving.

"People come through with their dope and the little things they forget," Holcomb said. "We are catching more of it."

The arrests at LAX's checkpoints might have improved because of a computer program developed at USC that places checkpoints in more effective spots and schedules them so terrorists cannot predict a pattern.

"The idea is to be more intelligent to determine what routes for checkpoints and how to intelligently place canine units," said USC computer science Professor Milind Tambe.

Students created the program that has been used at LAX since August 2007. LAX is the first airport to use it.

Tambe would not discuss specifics of the program for security reasons.

"Our program is basically mathematical," Tambe said. "The credit (for the arrests) goes to them. We give them a tool which is mathematical to place things at the right spot."

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