

# Wining About Your Dress

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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My wife and daughter love to watch the show ‘Say Yes to the Dress.’ This fascinating reality show follows brides around as they try to find their dream wedding dress. Of course, the show is filled with drama as friends and family give conflicting opinions, sometimes even insulting the bride because a particular dress is not flattering.

What shocks me are the prices. Many women come in with a dress budget. It is not unusual for them to find the perfect dress, which, of course, blows their budget out of the water, but they buy it anyway. But I’m most blown away when the brides have no budget at all – they’ll spend whatever they need to for the right gown. Some women have purchased dresses that cost more than the three cars I’ve owned in my lifetime. Combined.

I know I’m a stick in the mud, but I have a hard time rationalizing spending that much money on a dress you will wear for one day. I feel the money would be better spent on a down payment for a house or to pay down student loans.

Many, many brides, however, feel differently. In their minds, because their wedding is only one day, they have to make it absolutely perfect. And may God have mercy on the poor soul who goofs that one day up.

Take Yewande Oteh, for example. Two years ago she flew from Philadelphia to Montego Bay in Jamaica for her destination wedding. A ticket agent at the Philadelphia International Airport allegedly told Oteh that she could hang her wedding dress in a closet on the plane during the flight.

When she boarded her American Airlines flight, however, Oteh says flight attendant Melanie Masters said ‘no’ to the dress being hung up and that she had to put it in an overhead storage compartment in the First Class section instead.

Oteh then claims Masters became “indignant and agitated” while speaking to her, and even laughed when Oteh threatened to file a complaint. While sitting in economy, Oteh kept watch over her dress, but at one point she alleges she saw Masters and another flight attendant open the storage bin.

At this point Oteh asserts that “the flight attendants were placing something in the bin” and were “making fun of” her and her wedding gown. Upon landing in Jamaica, Oteh retrieved her dress only to find that it was covered in stains from red wine.

As a result, Oteh maintains she was “devastated.” The recent law school graduate insists she “suffered severe diarrhea, dehydration and depressive symptoms” after the flight. So, of course, Oteh is suing American Airlines and is seeking \$3.4 million damages for Masters “egregiously” destroying her wedding dress and the airline’s failure to investigate. According to the suit, the dress’s destruction caused her and her four family members on the flight “sustained and continued emotional and physical distress.”

Yvette Sterling, Oteh’s mother and attorney, declared “American Airlines and its personnel robbed all of us of this once-in-a-lifetime experience.” In her suit, Oteh says that Masters’ “willful and wanton conduct... has caused a lifetime of damage.”

Masters disputes Oteh’s version of the story, saying, “It really didn’t go like that at all.” American Airlines also released a statement, saying they “are reviewing the lawsuit.”

Oteh made no effort to veil her belief that American Airlines no longer flies the friendly skies.

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