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Liberal Senator, 69, and young ‘air rage’ wife kept relationship secret until she was 21



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Maygan Sensenberger leaves Provincial Court in Saskatoon, Tuesday, August 27, 2012. Sensenberger is the wife of Canadian Senator Rod Zimmer, she is charged with endangering the safety of the aircraft and causing a disturbance. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Liam Richards

Senator Rod Zimmer and Maygan Sensenberger kept relationship secret until she was 21

Maygan Sensenberger, the 23-year-old wife of a Liberal senator, is due back in court Wednesday in Saskatoon as part of a domestic dispute case that has entered the international spotlight thanks to the couple’s age difference.

Sensenberger is charged with causing a disturbance on an aircraft and uttering threats against her husband, Rod Zimmer, after an incident on an Air Canada flight last week. A charge of endangering an aircraft was withdrawn by the Crown.

A passenger on the flight [told the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix](#) that Sensenberger began yelling loudly at Zimmer, saying she didn’t want to meet his family in Saskatoon.

“She was threatening to slit his throat and leave him. She kept saying she’d leave him. Everyone could hear it,” the woman told the newspaper.

“He kept putting his hand on her arm to calm her down. She’d pull it away and yell that he was abusing her,” the passenger said.

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“(Zimmer) wasn’t being aggressive toward her. He seemed embarrassed about the whole thing.”

The personal lives of Canadian politicians, even ones in actual positions of power, rarely catch the public’s eye. But the optics of a wealthy 69-year-old senator and his attractive 23-year-old wife has created intense interest in the personal affairs of Canadian politician virtually unknown outside of certain Ottawa circles.

Sensenberger’s Facebook pictures of the couple — vacationing in Florida, drinking, passionately kissing while their dog watches — were splashed across some of the most popular news websites around the Globe, including the U.K’s *Daily Mail* and the *New York Daily News*.

The Facebook pictures, which were left open to the public to view, were taken down on Monday, as Sensenberger was released on bail after spending the weekend in jail.

While those pictures leave the impression of a jet-setting couple, details of how their May-September relationship came to be have been few.

Sensenberger’s grandmother, herself a year younger than Zimmer, said the couple met through friends several years ago.

Rita Sensenberger said they dated for years prior to their marriage last August, but waited until Maygan was 21 before announcing they were together.

Maygan grew up in Collingwood, Ont. and moved to Ottawa a few years ago to take classes there. She was a ballet dancer who had aspirations of acting.

Zimmer was appointed a senator in 2005 by former prime minister Paul Martin.

He was born in Saskatchewan, but called Winnipeg home.

He started his political career as an executive assistant to James Richardson, a cabinet minister under Pierre Trudeau, said Allen Mills, a politics professor at the University of Winnipeg and Zimmer’s former neighbour.

Zimmer has a long private-sector resume that includes executive positions with the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation and CanWest Capital Corp. He served on several boards including the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

He was a top fundraiser for the Liberal party in Manitoba and helped mentor young people with the party, Mills said.

“[He] seemed to be sort of the man in charge as a fundraiser under Chretien.”



Maygan Sensenberger leaves Provincial Court in Saskatoon, Monday, August 27, 2012 as she is questioned by CBC reporter Dan Kerlake. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Liam Richards

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Woman, 23, arrested for 'threatening her 69-year-old Canadian politician husband on a plane' just days before couple's first anniversary

- Maygan Sensenberger, 23, is accused of threatening her husband and other passengers aboard Air Canada flight
- Was heard yelling that her 69-year-old husband was in medical distress
- Police suspect alcohol played a part in the incident
- Sensenberger and Manitoba Senator Rod Zimmer married on August 27, 2011

By SHEJANA FARBEROV

A screengrab of the Daily News story about Maygan Sensenberger and Rod Zimmer. The story included 10 photos from Sensenberger's Facebook page. Screengrab



Maygan Sensenberger and Liberal Senator Rod Zimmer on their wedding day, August 27, 2011. Monday was their one-year anniversary. Facebook

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In a statement in the Senate in March 2010 promoting prostate cancer awareness, Mr. Zimmer revealed that seven years earlier, he had been diagnosed with throat cancer and given only a 20% chance of surviving the next two years.

He offered his personal remedy for beating cancer.

“A positive attitude generates energy and adrenaline and fights off disease and counters stress ... So, as much as is possible, honourable senators, take stress out of your life.”

With files from National Post wire services

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The couple, Maygan Sensenberger and Liberal Senator Rod Zimmer, and their dog.

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