

Tekst 2

A Rider Off the Rails

- 1 The Long Island Rail Road's etiquette bully has walked – again. John Clifford, notorious for loudly and aggressively harassing fellow riders to make them behave better, was acquitted of assault, disorderly conduct and other charges. Judge Larry Stephen of Manhattan Criminal Court said most of the witnesses had “an axe to grind,” and threw the case out.
- 2 And so Mr Clifford – despite years of complaints, arrests and summonses, none of which have stuck – is free to keep doing what he does: abusing fellow commuters in the name of peace, quiet and civility.
- 3 “Do I admit to being domineering?” he said in court. “Yeah.” Actually, he admits a lot worse: pouring coffee on people, cursing and berating them, slapping them for talking too loudly on cellphones and other sins.
- 4 He is a large (6-foot-4) former police officer, so it is easy to see why someone might be frightened when he comes after them, especially when he says – as he did to Donna DeCurtis – that he knows their names and where they live, and that “I can make your life hell.”
- 5 It is true that many people have forgotten how to interact respectfully with strangers and carry their self-absorbed behavior into public places. On commuter trains, where random strangers are forced to tolerate one another in close quarters for long stretches, cellphone jabberers are a particularly obnoxious life-form. None of this excuses Mr Clifford's behavior.
- 6 The railroad has many problems, including keeping its trains running and helping riders hurdle the gap between cars and platforms. It needs to do a lot more to instill a culture of decency and respect on board. Whether this means adding “quiet cars,” where cellphones are forbidden, or enforcing existing rules about loud conversations, feet on the seats and eating, it is important.
- 7 The judicial system also needs to recognize that harassing and threatening behavior like that repeatedly displayed by Mr Clifford is not only wrong, it could be downright dangerous. That isn't an axe to grind; it is just common sense.
- The New York Times, 2008*

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- 1p 2 Which argument did the judge give for throwing out the case against Mr Clifford?
He found that
- A Clifford promised to act more sensibly the next time he travelled by train.
 - B Clifford was only doing his job when correcting travellers' conduct.
 - C no witnesses dared testify against Clifford.
 - D people testified against Clifford for the wrong reasons.
 - E the railway company should have protected passengers from troublemakers like Clifford.
- 1p 3 What is the reason that Mr Clifford keeps on "doing what he does" (paragraph 2) according to the writer?
- A He has an illness that makes him act aggressively towards strangers.
 - B He is angry because the Railroad Authority has ignored his complaints.
 - C He refuses to accept that the use of mobile phones is restricted.
 - D He wants to force other travellers to behave correctly.
- 1p 4 What is the main function of paragraphs 3 and 4?
- A To illustrate what Clifford does to other train passengers.
 - B To make clear that Clifford's actions anger fellow travellers.
 - C To minimise the fuss made about Clifford's actions.
 - D To show that Clifford's former job has caused his present behaviour.
- 1p 5 Welke 'bijnaam' wordt in de tekst aan Mr Clifford gegeven?
Citeer deze 'bijnaam'.
- 1p 6 In welke twee alinea's maakt de schrijver duidelijk dat hij begrijpt hoe Mr Clifford tot zijn handelwijze komt?
Noteer de nummers van deze twee alinea's.
- 1p 7 Judging from the article as a whole, which of the following expresses the writer's opinion on the Clifford case?
- A He believes the judge may have taken too great a risk in releasing Clifford from prison.
 - B He feels Clifford has the right to correct people when they misbehave.
 - C He is convinced that Clifford's fellow travellers deliberately tried to make him lose his temper.
 - D He thinks that Clifford should not be allowed to take the law into his own hands.