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## **Look! Up in the Air!! And on the Train!!! Another Disruptive Passenger!!!! — Cameron on Transportation**

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We've seen a number of reports lately about "disruptive passengers" forcing a plane to divert after exhibiting some sort of frightening behavior.

Imagine being along for the ride when something like this happens:

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—An Air Canada flight to Tel Aviv lands in London after a female passenger starts [randomly choking people](#) on board. She is restrained in-flight and arrested upon landing.

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—A Southwest Airlines flight from Los Angeles to Houston detours to Corpus Christi, Texas, after a woman tries to [open the emergency exit door](#) mid-flight. Seen before departure screaming at people in the terminal, passengers wondered why she was allowed to board the plane. On landing, she is arrested. The captain buys pizza for the passengers to apologize for the delay. (Classy.)

—A Hawaiian airlines flight to the mainland returns to the islands after a passenger becomes verbally abusive to his family and strikes a flight attendant. On landing, he's arrested.

What happens to these “disruptive passengers?” It's hard to say, but in the last case the passenger pleaded guilty, was sentenced to three months' probation and was fined \$97,000 for the cost of the Hawaii diversion. Not included in the fine was the \$46,000 the airline had to pony up for meal vouchers for the delayed passengers. (Obviously NOT pizza).

But that guy got off light. Passengers who disrupt the duties of a flight crew member can face fines up to \$25,000, and sometimes, imprisonment. In addition, the airline can choose to ban the problem passenger from future flights — for life.

In some cases the behavior is a sign of mental instability. But too often the boorish behavior is tied to alcohol, a situation worsened by airlines selling booze in-flight to already inebriated flyers (the Hawaiian passenger had also brought his own bottle aboard).

Handling a misbehaving passenger at 35,000 feet is one thing, but on the train the rules are a bit different.

Metro-North conductors have the power to “de-train” a passenger at the next station and call the authorities. And assaulting a Metro-North conductor can get you arrested, as [two fare beaters](#) found after getting in a tussle while being ejected from their train. Assaulting an MTA employee is a Class D felony punishable by up to seven years in prison.

But by far my favorite story of a troublesome traveler involved Amtrak and a passenger who would not shut up.

I'm not referring to the time that [New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie](#) was asked to move his seat when he mistakenly sat in the Acela's Quiet Car and started yapping on his cellphone.

No, this case involved a [woman](#) who carried on a 16-hour cellphone conversation on Amtrak's “Coast Starlight” en route from Los Angeles to Seattle. Despite being seated in the train's Quiet Car, she ignored the withering gaze of fellow passengers as she continued her chat. Finally, a passenger confronted her, and was met with an “aggressive response.”

That prompted conductors to stop the train and have her escorted off, far from her destination. She was charged with disorderly conduct and told reporters she felt “disrespected” by her fellow travelers and Amtrak police.

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Imagine that happening on a Metro-North train, where the Quiet Car rules are seldom enforced.

Well, I guess we can all dream.

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