

New York Leaders' Failure To Address Mental Crisis

THE ISSUE: The death of a homeless man who was put into a hold after yelling at passengers on the subway.



have seen Jordan Neely hundreds of times forming his Michael Jackson impersonation ("Failed by a City," May 5). I have never seen him become violent. I have seen people in the subway asking for money or food become violent many times.

We really need to help mentally ill people living in the subway ways — for their sake and for ours because we can be a victim of them (or they can be a victim of us).

Also, we can't be vigilantes. We need police to do their jobs, and police the subways. We need police who are trained to help the mentally ill instead of trying to arrest them. **Edward Drossman**
Manhattan

• It seems we are still back in the dark ages when it comes to assisting mentally ill citizens. New York's finest, the NYPD, and FDNY, do the best they can and are usually on the front lines when it comes to these issues. It's not fair to them to become the intermediaries for disturbed individuals.

I don't feel that New York City residents should try to intercede unless it is a case of self-defense. Many of these folks act out in order to get some sort of help. **Donna Goddard**
Ronkonkoma

• As someone who retired in 2013 after 40 years of service with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, it has become quite obvious that elected and appointed New York City officials have failed miserably when it comes to both safety for the public and meaningful plans for those out on the streets.

Between 1975 and 1982, mental-health reform spread across America. Everyone was told community-based care would be available in our communities to serve those released from voluntary and involuntary confinement. It seemed to work in theory but unfortunately not in reality.

What happened on a subway car near Broadway-Lafayette subway station was truly tragic for everyone there. Who killed Jordan Neely? This question has an answer: The system killed him. Chronic inaction killed him.

Unless we deal directly with our mental-health crisis, incidents like that will continue. **Salvator Giarratani**
Boston, Mass.

• "Unsafe public fends for itself," (May 5), highlights the crux of the problem at hand. Once again, we return to the same theme of our failure as a society in dealing with mentally ill people. Tragically, the response to Jordan Neely's threatening and menacing behavior led to his death.

Society is now paying a hefty price for years of neglecting to prioritize mental health. We will surely continue to witness these not-uncommon incidents unless we totally revamp a broken system and remove it from the back burner. **Ronald G. Frank**
West Orange, NJ

• Jordan Neely was failed not only by this city but by our country. Our open borders leading to New York City, with taxpayers footing the bill of about \$10 million a day.

Take that money, build decent shelters and world-class health treatment for the homeless, drug-addicted and mentally ill. We could be a beacon of light to other cities, but instead our politicians are too busy trying to place blame on those they don't like. **Martin Garfinkle**
Staten Island

• Every human being has the right to defend themselves from assault — whether physical or the verbal threat of an assault.

I am deeply sorry for the homeless, and there is no question that we need to find ways to treat, house, feed and employ these individuals who are down on their luck.

That said, that doesn't give them the right to assault innocent citizens who are just trying to get from one place to the other, minding their business, on the subway. Defunding the police has had a reactionary effect where citizens defend themselves where there are no police to help them. **Michael P. Henders**

A Tale

Why London life



NICOLE GELINAS

It was possible to walk around central London and not feel a difference from Manhattan years ago. New York was rougher, louder and dirtier, but felt safe and comfortable in places. No more. Even as York has descended into dystopia, post-COVID-19, though pandemic-worn, its standards for public health and safety are far-sized populations, but similar trajectories over time. Both lost residency as the suburbs pulled class away from city centers. Both experienced a financial market crash that attracted native-born and the roaring 1920s. London has more than New York now: Brexit, markets, a rich Russian

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