

UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL SINCE 2008

WHERE IS THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO SAFETY? TALAL QURDIEH'S ATTEMPTED MURDER

BY FAYEZ KHOZINDAR

ON MAY 31ST TALAL QURDIEH WAS driving his taxicab, 666TX, when he was dispatched to the 700 block of north Avers at approximately 1:02 AM. As Talal was waiting at the location for his fare to come out, the offender approached him and shot him in the chest for no reason. As soon as the shot was fired, Talal drove his taxicab four blocks till he found a police car and asked for their help.

He was hospitalized and is still in great pain with a bullet in his chest. Talal is fortunate to have a warm home with his wife and three children, but he cannot sleep because of three broken ribs. We visited him at the hospital and he expressed his frustration that he had been put in that position. His cab did not have a security camera and there was no button to alert police, as had been planned years ago. He pointed out that cab drivers have to subject themselves to more danger these days in their effort to make a living. And he was angry at the city's failure to provide more safety. The police department Business Alert of the 11th District (Harrison) described the offender as a black male, 20 to 24 years old, 5'6" to 5'7", 120 to 130 Ibs, dark complexion, wearing dark clothing.

On April 17, 2017, Rachel Cromidas wrote in Chicagoist.com that police warn of taxi drivers robbed at gunpoint and knifepoint around Chicago. "In at least four incidents around the city's North Side, taxi drivers picked up a man for a fare, and once at the destination, the man put the drivers in a headlock and demanded money while

threatening the drivers with a weapon-a handgun in at least two cases, and a large knife in another. In each case, the man took money and cell phones from the cab drivers before fleeing."

If you are wondering of why Talal chose to venture around and take that fare at 1:00 o'clock in the morning at that dangerous area; the answer is simple and sad; TNP, ride share, Uber, Lyft, the City. There are 229 thousand registered TNP in the city of Chicago, and that makes it hard for 6999 taxi cabs to compete for a limited number of fares in the city.

After the murder of Kamil Shamji last year, UTCC met with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) in May 2016, when we raised the need for placing a safety camera in every taxicab, knowing the roll of technology in capturing the perpetrator in this case. UTCC also requested the removal of all cheap cameras which take still pictures every 10 seconds only and have no audio. These cameras should be replaced with technology that must include: 1) forward and backward facing views, 2) video and audio, and 3) a memory card to retain footage for a minimum of 48 hours. If customers are aware that this technology exists in taxicabs, they will be more likely to modify their



Driver Jalal Qurdieh with his son "Zade" at Cook County Hosp.

behavior and if and when a crime is committed, the evidence will be captured by the video camera so that justice can be served. ■

A CAB INDUSTRY ON THE BRINK

THE CAB INDUSTRY HERE IS FALLING apart as we all know, and the situation was revealed in all its grim details in the study just released by AFSCME.

42 percent of the 7,000 Chicago cab medallions are inactive. 774 medallions have been surrendered and 569 are in foreclosure.

2,700 of the remaining medallions are owned by owner-operators or owners with 4 medallions or less.

And releasing the report, the AFSCME cab union called for a series of reforms such as removing the age limit on cabs, as long as they can pass inspection, getting rid of medallion license renewal fees, waiver of the ground transportation tax, and steps to help with foreclosures.

The UTCC supports all those reforms but we feel they will do little to solve the problem. We would like to add the following demands on the city council:

1. Require ride-share vehicles to pay the airport departure tax, like everybody else. It's worth noting that the reason they are not required to pay is that Uber lobbyist David Plouffe illegally pressured the mayor to get rid of them, and had to pay a 90 thousand dollar fine as a result (see last Voice issue).
2. All ride-share drivers should be finger printed, as a large majority of aldermen have supported for some time. Alderman Anthony Beale ordered a six-month study of finger printing, but that was a year ago and we have seen no study (see page 3).
3. Cabs desperately need an APP comparable to Uber's and Lyft's. The UTCC called for such an APP four years ago, and the city promised to deliver one two years ago. We still don't have anything like a comparable APP.

We urge the Progressive Caucus of the City Council to support our cause, and try to mitigate some of the damage that's been done. ■

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COMMON SENSE CORNER

THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS Community Council (UTCC) is a worker center for all drivers in the greater Chicago area, which includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, a living wage and unity, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.

That said, UTCC is seeking a more cohesive VOICE for our immigrant drivers over their own working conditions through mutual support, collective action and formal association of drivers.

Our committed and visionary board members know in advance the future meetings of many city departments and groups, so we may speak “Truth to Power”, including, but not limited to; the Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Aviation Department (CAD), Mayor of Chicago Task Force, Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), City Council Committee Meetings, General City Council Meetings, Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and Illinois Transportation Trade Association (ITTA).

This knowledge and training helps UTCC address our driver’s concerns through direct actions and negotiations with authorities, and to speak Truth to Power, so we may translate the previously stated goals into continuous victories.

On April 20th, 2017, we were supposed to have an Aviation meeting at Midway Airport at 10:00 AM. Three days before that date, I received a call from our Board Member and steward at Midway Airport, Mr. Jamil Elayan telling me about the ugly situation of bribery and diving illegally into the terminal to get fares. I told my dear friend that he called me just on time, and I told him that we are having our monthly meeting with Mr. Greg McGhee and Jack Wirkus on the 20th, and he should come and talk to them about this matter.

Mr. Elayan told me that there are as many as ten drivers who would like to come and testify and share their experiences with the starters and describe what was going on at the terminal especially at the night hours. I told him that I will be happy to help transport the drivers and bring them to the meeting place at 5050 W. 55th St. Economy Parking Building using UTCC’s Mobil Van. The drivers could leave their taxis at the lot, and we would leave their numbers to the booth just in case the line moved quickly. Mr. Elayan liked the idea and he promised to arrange with the other drivers to be ready for the day of the meeting.



On April 17th, 2017, we received an E-mail from Sheree Tolliver the Ground Transportation Manager saying; “our April Task Force meeting has been canceled. We will convene May 25th, 2017 at 10 am”.

This was devastating news for all of us who were preparing for this upcoming meeting with the Aviation people to solve the bad situation of bribery and diving at the terminal. So, I decided to do something about it through the following response;

Ms. TOLLIVER, AND ALL,

You know that the drivers are waiting for this meeting to address their concerns and seek some-kind of a solution from you, and when they do that, drivers must rearrange their busy schedule to accommodate the time of the meeting you chose for them. For this particular meeting, which you decided to cancel and or postpone, UTCC received many complaints about bribery and diving illegally to get fares at the terminals, and we arranged for about half a dozen drivers to leave their taxis at Midway staging lot and UTCC’s Mobil Van would bring them to the meeting to describe their experiences and share them with the authorities.

This matter can’t wait another month to address without finding a remedy for it. Therefore, we urge you to arrange for a special meeting this coming Thursday at Midway lot to talk to the drivers at 10:00 AM and find a solution, or have the meeting as scheduled at 10:00 AM, so the drivers can be able to meet with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,
UTCC”

The following day, I received a call from Mr. Greg Mc Ghee, the Assistant Commissioner at Midway Airport to tell me that he will be happy to meet with the drivers on the 20th at 11:00 AM.

I notified Mr. Elayan with the good news, and all of us were looking forwards to the day of the meeting.

That day, I arrived at the Midway Airport staging area around 10:30, got out of the van with my bullhorn, and started explaining the situation to the drivers and the reason why we were there. “Drivers! We are here because we received a



From left to right: Awwad, Adewol, Singh, Jouth, Jhazly, and Elayan in a special meeting Mr. Mc Ghee at Midway Airport

UTCC

UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

OUR VISION

To organize and unify all licensed chauffeurs in the Chicago area, so we can collectively overcome oppression and achieve economic and social justice.

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lot of complaints from you about bribery taking place and diving illegally into the terminals to get fares. UTCC has arranged for a meeting with Mr. Greg Mc Ghee, Assistant Commissioner at Midway Airport to discuss this issue. If you want to participate and share your story and “speak truth to power”, will be happy to take you to the meeting and bring you back. Just leave your vehicle in the line, and we will give your number to the booth so you will not lose your turn”

After a few minutes, I loaded the UTCC Van with five drivers, gave their numbers to the booth attendant, and we drove up to the meeting place at 5050 W. 55th St., Mr. Elayan drove himself over. Mr. Mc Ghee and Mr. Wirkus were waiting for us over there.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Where is the finger-printing report?

BY CHRIS CHANDLER

LAST JUNE ALD. ANTHONY BEALE ANNOUNCED a six month study to see if fingerprints should be required for ride share drivers at Uber and Lyft.

“Once that study comes back, trust me when I tell you, they have six months. And if it comes back ‘Yes, fingerprinting is necessary,’ I promise you as strong as I’m sitting here breathing, that they’re gonna be mandated to fingerprint in six months,” Beale told the Sun-Times June 20th.

It’s been a year now, and we still have not seen any study. We called Ald. Beale’s office to ask about any progress.

“It’s my understanding the study goes on,” said Beale’s assistant, Mike Jones.

We asked if we could speak to the alderman. “No, I am his assistant” Jones said.

At the time Beale announced the study, a large majority of aldermen supported the ordinance requiring the fingerprinting, but after Beale met with aides to Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Uber lobbyists, he delayed the issue by announcing the study, to be conducted by a “commission.” We still don’t know who serves on this commission.

Two months ago the Sun-Times quoted Beale as saying the commission had found fingerprinting should not be used. He was hoping the issue would be forgotten.

But the need for fingerprinting was made dramatically clear when the Massachusetts legislature ordered a background study on all that



Ald. Anthony Beale Caught in the middle.

state’s ride share drivers.

Of the 71,000 ride share drivers, 8,200 flunked the background checks, or well over ten per cent, according to the Boston Globe report. 1,559 had been convicted of violent crimes, and 51 were sex offenders.

Since Chicago has three times the number of ride share drivers as Massachusetts (according to the AFSCME study), it’s likely we have some 4,500 convicted felons and 150 convicted sex offenders driving for ride share companies here right now. ■

Mass. ride-hailing checks have other states weighing more thorough driver reviews

ORIGINALLY PRINTED APRIL 10, 2017. BY ADAM VACCARO, THE BOSTON GLOBE

THE STARTLING RESULTS OF THE FIRST state-run background check of Uber and Lyft drivers by Massachusetts has some regulators in other states and cities asking if they should toughen their reviews of drivers’ backgrounds.

More than 8,200 of the nearly 71,000 drivers who had already cleared background checks by the ride-hailing companies have been banned after failing a new state records review, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities announced in early April. The numbers included 51 registered sex offenders and hundreds who were rejected for other sex-related crimes and violent histories. Others were banned for minor license-

related offenses.

Dan Saltzman, a Portland, Ore., commissioner who oversees the ride-hail industry, said the Massachusetts results are prompting him to consider a more thorough review of drivers in his city. Portland requires Uber and Lyft to hire an outside company to review their drivers, and it occasionally audits those results. But the Massachusetts data, Saltzman said, “gives us food for thought” about requiring a government check.

“That’s our whole job, worrying about the safety of our passengers,” Saltzman said. “I think we need to dig down a little deeper to make sure that people who shouldn’t be driving aren’t slipping through.”

The Massachusetts review was authorized by the Legislature last year, and the background checks began in January. It does not include fingerprinting, which Uber, in particular, has fiercely opposed, but does look deeper into drivers’ criminal and driving pasts than the companies’ vetting does.

Most jurisdictions that regulate ride-hailing companies require them to conduct background checks but do not include a government review. Many states have also recently adopted laws that bar cities and towns from requiring government checks. These laws are favored by Uber, which has lobbied in state capitols across the country. ■

Uber, Lyft to avoid fingerprinting drivers — for now

ORIGINALLY PRINTED JUNE 20, 2016. BY FRAN SPIELMAN, THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

IT LOOKS LIKE MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL MAY have staved off an embarrassing defeat on the City Council floor on a controversial ordinance to license and fingerprint ride-hailing drivers.

Transportation Committee Chairman Anthony Beale (9th), who pushed through his more rigid licensing ordinance last week, on Monday agreed to a compromise that would license all Uber and Lyft drivers after a daylong course that could be completed online and background checks performed by the companies with information shared with the city.

But there would be no fingerprinting for at least six months.

The hiatus would be used to appoint a commission charged with conducting what Beale calls an “independent study” of the value and fairness of fingerprinting. If the recommendation is to proceed with fingerprinting, it will be done. If not, fingerprinting would be eliminated as a requirement for all city employees, the chairman said.

“I have the votes for fingerprinting. But we’re gonna give ‘em six months to back up the claim whether we need to do it or we don’t,” Beale said

after a sometimes heated closed-door briefing that included aldermen, company lobbyists and top mayoral aides.

“Once that study comes back, trust me when I tell you, they have six months. And if it comes back that, ‘Yes, fingerprinting is necessary,’ I promise you as strong as I’m sitting here breathing that they’re gonna be mandated to fingerprint in six months.” Beale was asked why he agreed to the softer version if, as he claims, he really did have the votes to pass the more rigid licensing ordinance co-signed by more than two-thirds of the

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UBER IS IN BIG TROUBLE

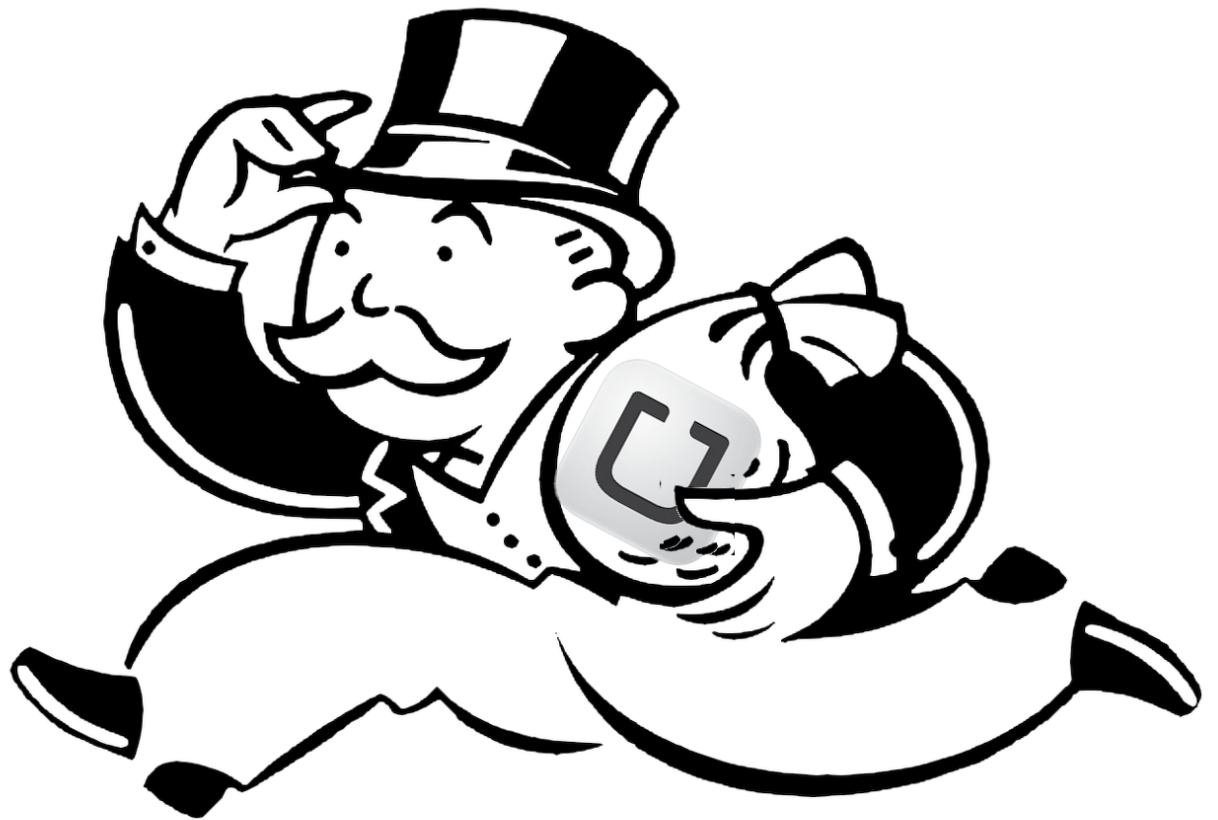
IT'S NOT JUST THAT UBER FOUNDER AND CEO Travis Kalanick is being put out to pasture. His whole aggressive take over plan is falling apart.

The company lost \$708 million in the first three months of this year because it is subsidizing its drivers to undercut the competition. According to Kalanick's original plan, Uber in supposed to have established a monopoly by now, and replaced humans with driverless cars.

But driverless cars that can safely handle city traffic are still many years away. Meanwhile everybody is loosing. Cab drivers are going broke, Uber drivers are making less and less because they just keep recruiting more drivers (220,000 ride share drivers in Chicago?), and the city is loosing millions as Uber funnels millions a month to its tax havens.

And some are finally becoming aware of what is going on. As a recent report from Naked Capitalism noted, Uber "cooks the numbers it shows investors, drivers and the press to make it seem like something other than a black box that uses arragence and lawlessness to make a bet on establishing a monopoly on transport."

So stay tuned, but it looks like Uber is going to crash. ■



Common Sense Corner

Continued from Page 2

It was a very constructive and informative meeting, for little over one hour. Drivers expressed their frustration with the lack of rules and regulation enforcement at Midway Airport Terminal, and demanded more personal to look into this matter especially at night.

Mr. Mc Ghee said he needed more information from the drivers to help improve the situation at the terminal. The drivers asked him to install a suggestion box in the waiting area by the vending machines, so they could write to the Aviation Department anonymously so that we may -together- put an end to this dilemma.

Mr. Mc Ghee agreed to do that and promised to

have the carpenter install the suggestion box the following week.

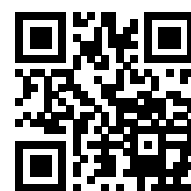
UTCC greatly appreciates this kind of cooperation and understanding from the Aviation Department personal and their quick response to the driver's concerns by arranging for this emergency meeting.

Also, my personal thanks and appreciation to my friend Mr. Jamil Elayan and the other drivers who left their vehicles at the staging area at Midway airport that day; Mr. Hussein Awwad , Mr. Hakeem Adewol, Mr. Paramjeet Singh, Mr.Fouad Jouth and Mr. Ram Lal Jhazly.

This is the spirit of Organized labor... this is the spirit of organized drivers...

And remember, TOGETHER, WE CAN DO IT!
—FAYEZ KHOZINDAR, UTCC CHAIRMAN

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 In its nine years of existence, the UTCC has developed official and professional relationships with: BACP, the DOF, AH (400 W. Superior), the Depts. of Aviation at O'Hare and Midway, the CPD, lawyers and law firms, taxi organizations around the country and others. These are relationships that we have the experience and track record for addressing and resolving issues for the benefit of the cabdriver community here in Chicago. **This is why YOU need to join YOUR TAXI UNION—the UTCC. ARE YOU A MEMBER YET?**

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JUNE 26 ISSUE OF TIME MAGAZINE, AVAILABLE ON LINE NOW.

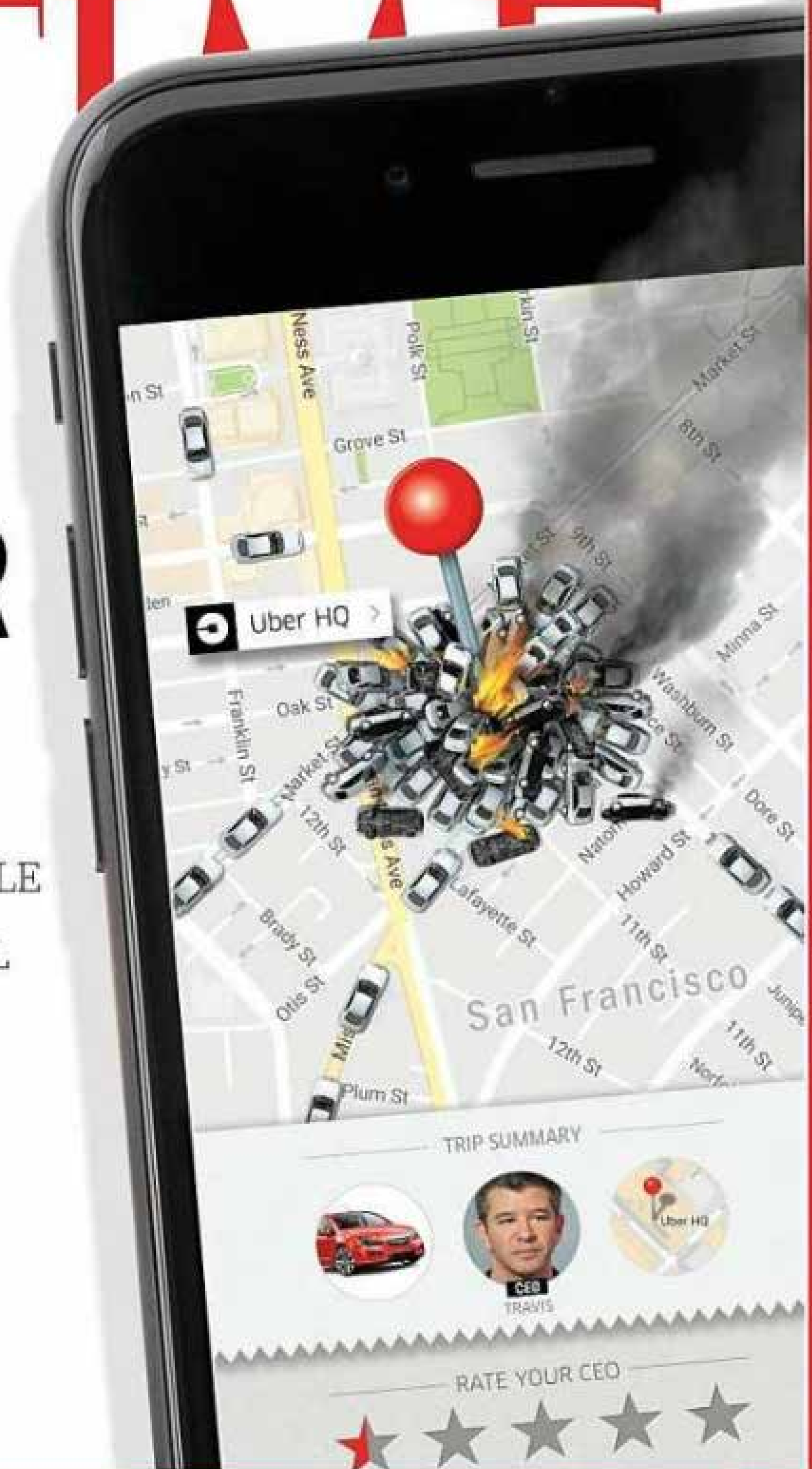
JUNE 28, 2017

T T T T

UBER FAIL

UPHEAVAL AT THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE STARTUP IS A WAKE-UP CALL FOR SILICON VALLEY

BY KATY STEINMETZ AND MATT VELLA



time.com

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Convention Schedule

EVENT NAME	VENUE	START	END	ATTENDEES
THE SALVATION ARMY-CENTRAL REGIONAL MEETING	Chicago Marriott Northwest	06/08/2017	06/12/2017	3300
NATIONAL NURSES UNITED 2017 THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT	McCormick Place North	06/10/2017	06/12/2017	1600
NeoCon® 2017	The Merchandise Mart	06/12/2017	06/14/2017	40,000
UFPA 2017 UNITED FRESH ANNUAL CONVENTION 2017	McCormick Place West	06/13/2017	06/15/2017	4500
MARC ANNUAL 2017 CONFERENCE	Swissotel Chicago	06/16/2017	06/21/2017	500
DIA 2017 GLOBAL ANNUAL MEETING	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South, McCormick Place West	06/18/2017	06/21/2017	6500
CFA ANNUAL PROGRAM	Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park	06/20/2017	06/25/2017	650
TECHTEXTIL NORTH AMERICA 2017	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	06/20/2017	06/22/2017	3000
2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE	Sheraton Grand Chicago	06/22/2017	06/30/2017	1000
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE	McCormick Place West	06/22/2017	06/27/2017	25000
2017 INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING		06/23/2017	07/05/2017	120
2017 NHL DRAFT	United Center	06/23/2017	06/24/2017	20000
2017 DISTRICT GOVERNOR-ELECT (DGE) SEMINAR	Hilton Chicago	06/27/2017	06/30/2017	1620
100TH LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	06/30/2017	07/04/2017	30000
100TH LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION	McCormick Place North, McCormick Place South	06/30/2017	07/04/2017	
2017 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD) WARRIOR GAMES	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	06/30/2017	07/08/2017	3000
2017 CHICAGO KICS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH SOCCER CUP	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place	07/03/2017	07/11/2017	2500
2017 WORLD CONGRESS ON PEDIATRIC DERMATOLOGY	Hyatt Regency Chicago	07/06/2017	07/09/2017	1000



Fingerprinting drivers

Continued from Page 3

City Council’s 50 aldermen. “This has been a very contentious issue for my colleagues. . . . There’s different sides. People saying it should be done. Some people are saying it doesn’t,” Beale said. “To clear the air and to clear all the smoke and mirrors, the study will streamline exactly what we need to be doing in Chicago.”

Until last week Emanuel had steadfastly opposed licensing on grounds that it would deny consumers the transportation choices they demand and leave riders on Chicago’s South and West Sides underserved by the taxicab industry high and dry.

On Monday, the mayor hailed what he called an “honest compromise to move forward” on a contentious issue. He called Chicago the “first city to do licensing” and “get ride-share to agree to that.” “Alderman Beale and I worked through some issues today. . . . We’re gonna have a six- to nine-month study of fingerprinting citywide about a whole host of things,” the mayor said.

That’s the version Ald. John Arena (45th) sup-



ports. When Beale makes a motion on the City Council floor Wednesday to substitute the compromise ordinance, Arena says he’ll push for a vote on Beale’s original licensing ordinance. “This proposal that came up half-way through this meeting of a six-month study on the validity of fingerprinting . . . is ludicrous. Until we have a more comprehensive database of offenders, fingerprinting is the gold standard,” Arena said. ■

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The UTCC provides a range of services to our members as part of our mission to Protect Your License. We offer discount legal representation for Business and Consumer Protection tickets written on Chauffeur’s Licenses, advocacy to resolve issues with the BACP, Departments of Finance and Aviation, affiliations and references to where to obtain Free Legal Advice. More than this, we assist you to resolve individual complaints against garages, the BACP, CPD and other Industry Grievances. We organize campaigns for change at the city, state, and federal levels which seek to protect the long-term interests of Taxi Drivers. We strive to empower drivers to fight back against corruption and exploitation, financial or otherwise. **VISIT: WWW.GOUTCC.ORG FOR MEMBERSHIP DETAILS**

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EID MUBARAK 4:43 PM



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