

UTCC VOICE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED TAXIDRIVERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL SINCE 2008

CHICAGO DISPATCHER, FRIEND OF UBER

Threatens to sue UTCC over photograph

BY ROCKY OROK

GEORGE LUTFALLAH, PUBLISHER OF the Chicago Dispatcher, in his November issue declared that “Uber wasn’t the problem” in his attempt to justify his continued support for Uber over the gradually declining cab industry. What

a disappointing statement to make because that is news to us, and the many cabdrivers trying to make a living these days.

His anti-cab industry rhetoric shows that he is just a fair-weather friend of the cabdrivers.

Writing to exonerate Uber and putting all the

blame on rising medallion prices is like not being aware of the technological wave and innovation sweeping the whole world.

Though the cab industry in Chicago had problems with skyrocketing medallion prices just

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Rahm Schemes to Get Rid of Fingerprinting

BY CHRIS CHANDLER

THANKS TO A VERY CLEVER SERIES OF moves by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the giant ride share company Uber has finally got its way. Their Chicago drivers will not have to be fingerprinted. While he was at it, he dealt another blow to the shrinking cab business, eliminating fingerprinting for cabdrivers too.

All of this rests on the interpretation of a seemingly harmless opportunity for cab companies, included in a long list of reforms to help the industry that were approved in November as part of the 2018 budget.

“Allow taxicab companies to choose fingerprinted-based or non-biometric based criminal background check when onboarding taxicab drivers. Applicants must still clear criminal and driving history thresholds.”

No member of the Progressive Caucus, and very few other aldermen realized when they approved the budget that they were eliminating fingerprinting immediately for ride share drivers and cab drivers alike. How could they, considering the intentionally misleading item slipped in to a list of agreed upon reforms? So how did Rahm pull off this coup? With a series of clever moves starting a month before the budget vote.

1) New Reform Item

October 23, BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno met with half of the Mayor’s Taxi Task Force to release the final version of reforms for the industry that the Task Force had been working’ on for a year. But there was a new item listed in their reforms, item 2 b, which was the one allowing companies not to fingerprint, cited above. Two cab drivers on the Task Force objected loudly, saying it could pave the way for eliminating fingerprinting. When the Commissioner presented the list of reforms to the other half of the Task Force, there was strong resistance from the owners. some complaining personally to the Commissioner. Divide and conquer. The Item remained.

2) The Fingerprint Study

Nov. 6, the City finally released the long overdue Fingerprint study. Announced in June of 2016 as a six-month study to determine if fingerprinting is discriminatory, the study does not mention race or discrimination. It’s a brief paper by an assistant professor at the U of I Chicago comparing cab drivers and ride share drivers in various ways, and concluding they are very similar. This was enough for the Commissioner to proclaim that there isn’t much difference. What about discrimination?

Anyone asked to study the question would point out that fingerprinting itself is not discriminatory; it’s factual. What can be unfair is the way the information is used in hiring decisions. Anyone studying the question would then check to see how it’s been used by the city in hiring cabdrivers, and find there is one obvious unfair provision, barring employment for possession of a small amount of pot. The obvious solution would be to eliminate that provision. But then fingerprinting would not be discriminatory anymore.

3) Part of budget

Passed Nov. 21. The mayor made the list of taxi reforms, including the new fingerprint item, part of his 2018 City Budget, bypassing the Transportation Committee. The press concentrated on other parts of the budget, including a slight tax increase on Uber and other rideshares. It wasn’t until after the budget was passed that the Sun-Times announced the innocuous sounding fingerprint item meant the immediate end to fingerprinting for cab drivers (presumably told so by the city or Uber’s P.R. firm.) The article went on to scold the city council for endangering public safety, but that was hypocritical since the paper had never warned the public about what was at stake. When a member of the Progressive Caucus tried to get the fingerprint issue on the finance committee agenda, the city re-



fused to allow it. So, with the passage of the budget, the mayor had finally got rid of that pesky fingerprint issue after two years of false starts. And the three-pronged attack was hugely successful. Very clever of Rahm and his PR company.

Two years earlier Uber had to spend millions of dollars on TV. commercials and P.R., and former Obama campaign manager David Plouffe had to personally lobby aldermen and threaten that Uber would leave Chicago if the city council insisted on fingerprinting. This time the whole fingerprinting issue was quietly buried by deceptive language in a deceptive place.

Very clever, and deeply cynical. ■



Tens of peace-loving drivers congregate under severe freezing temperatures to protest and call for justice for the brutal murder of Ismail Abdulle. See page 6 for more.

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COMMON SENSE CORNER

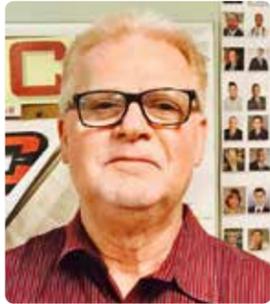
Taking Care of Drivers Families: Why is Only Flash Cab Doing It?

THE YEAR 2017 HAS BEEN DISASTROUS for the safety of our drivers. Early in the year Talal Kurdieh barely survived an attempted murder. And during the holidays we were forced to say goodbye to one of our dear friends, Ismail Abdulle who was brutally murdered by Francisco Ojeda on Christmas Eve.

In both cases, UTCC was instrumental in its efforts of supporting families who are victims of violence. UTCC did this by collecting funds at both airports and many ethnic restaurants frequented by drivers in the city, and by placing donation boxes at several taxicab companies where drivers pay their leases every week.

The writer of this column is taking the burden of collecting these funds and issuing a certified check to the beneficiaries of the victims and documenting the event of surrendering these funds via picture taking ceremony and publishing it in the pages of UTCC Voice.

One day, and during our tour collecting funds from several boxes, I was called to the office of Rahul Parikh, manager/driver coordinator at Flash Cab company, where Mr. Parikh showed me a file for a driver who just passed away. In the file, I saw the ID of the deceased, Mr. Anwar K. Syed, the ID of his beneficiary, and a ten thousand dollar check to be surrendered to the family.



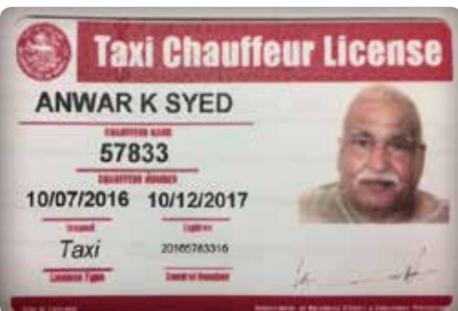
Flash Cab has initiated an Independent Taxicab Operator Beneficiary Fund for its workforce. Drivers have the choice of whether they'd like to opt-In or not. As a participant in the Beneficiary Fund, the driver agrees to pay \$10.00 for enrollment as well as \$10.00 every time another participant passes away.

On Wednesday, January 31, 2018, at 2:00 PM, I went to Flash Cab Company to attend the ceremony of surrendering a \$10,000 check to the mother of Mr. Syed, Mrs. Bibi Asghari, who sat on a chair with tearful eyes, and I found myself knelling in front of her to give my condolences.

After that, Mr. Parikh passionately told the gathering that Flash has been executing this service for its drivers quietly for a long time, and now is the time to expose it and demand that all drivers should participate, and all taxicab companies must initiate the same program for the sake of helping the drivers and their families.

UTCC salutes Flash Cab for this ingenious plan which makes it easier for the beneficiaries of passing drivers to meet the expenses in the aftermath of the death of their loved ones. It is convenient, efficient, and common sense to adopt this plan by all taxicab companies in the city of Chicago.

**—FAYEZ KHOZINDAR,
UTCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



From Left to Right, Top to Bottom: Mother of the late Mr. Anwar K. Syed (Mrs. Bibi Asghari) signs a receipt to receive the check of ten thousand dollars; Flash officials surrounding Mrs. Asghari as she shows her check; License of the late Anwar Syed; Official Check given to Mrs. Asghari.



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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**Chicago Dispatcher,
Friend of Uber**

Continued from Page 1

like other big cities operating the medallion system and most stakeholders were aware of this, however, the market was still able to support the industry. The medallion prices would have ultimately been adjusted down the road by the market forces of demand and supply or by a market bubble just like the housing bubble.

The advent of the ride-hailing industry accelerated the bubble resulting in a burst. This acceleration was mostly due to the fact that Uber with the help of Mayor Rahm Emanuel circumvented all the rules and was not playing fairand is still not playing fair.

So, the fundamental problem was Uber and its unfair practices aided by the city. Given a level playing field, the cab industry would have adjust-

CHICAGO DISPATCHER

ed to market conditions.

Your support for Uber is obvious from the many Uber ads in your publication. You can't afford to eat your cake and have it.

For many years, Lutfallah and the Dispatcher have attacked UTCC for long time in attempt to discredit us. We have always taken the high road and ignore the antics because we believe all drivers are smart enough to know the truth.

But now, he has gone further, and his attorney has sent us a letter threatening to sue us for using a photograph in our last issue he claimed he took and

demanding a payment of \$5,000 as licensing fee.

We believe it's a silly lawsuit since we simply printed the ad as it was given to us.

If we had been aware that it was his photo, we would have informed the owner of the ad to send us another picture or we would have offered him \$25, the standard rate for photos from agencies.

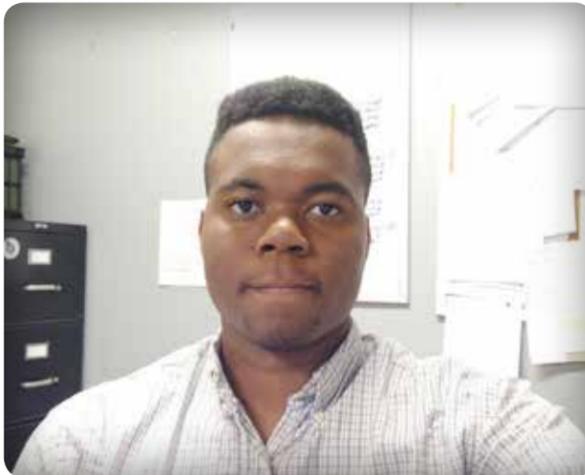
But \$5,000 dollars? He is either desperate for money or allowing his imagination to run wild and cloud his judgment. Further development will be communicated as necessary. ■

WELCOME MICHAEL!

MY NAME IS MICHAELRUSH NWANAH, but everyone calls me Michael. I am a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I am a senior and am studying political science and biology. I hope to one day become a psychiatrist. I have lived in Chicago for most of my life but I am originally from Nigeria. I love food music, soccer, and basketball.

The opportunity to intern at UTCC stems from my father being a taxi-driver. He was a taxi driver for over a decade, and I developed insight of the ins and outs of the occupation. I am well aware of the exorbitant cost it takes to be a driver. The many regulations and overall lack of safety are immense problems on a day to day basis. Ride-sharing companies are taking away business, plummeting the price of medallions, and making billions. Taxi drivers are hard working and are simply trying to make a living and support their families, but they are regularly being shown the end of the stick. They need to be represented, and UTCC does that.

I have participated in community organizations since I was in high school. I believe it is essential for people especially minorities or immigrants, to come together, as it the best way to be heard. One of my favorite quotes truly encompasses this:



"Every successful individual knows that his or her achievement depends on a community of persons working together."

-PAUL RYAN.

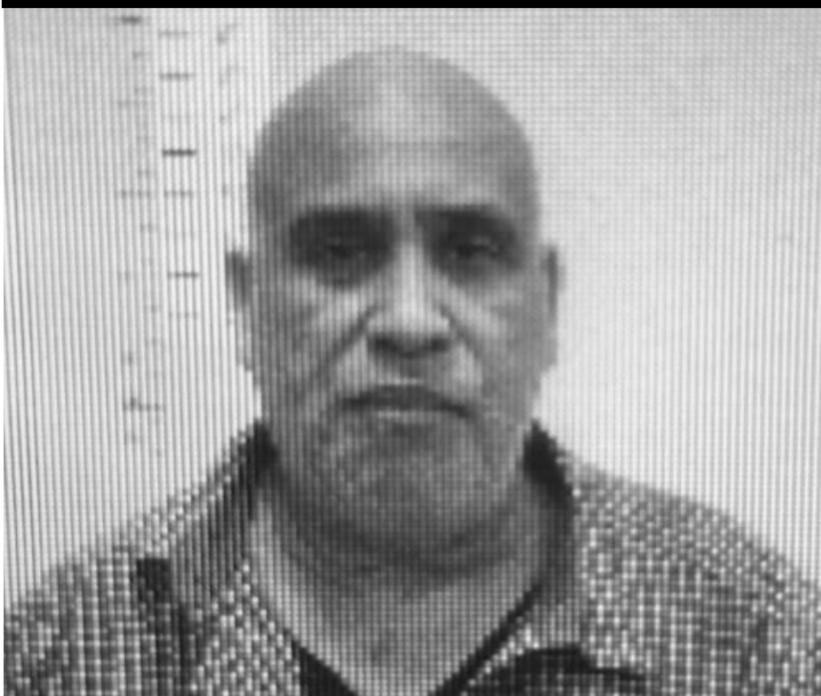
Regardless of the situation, coming together and staying united drives people to success. I joined the UTCC because hundreds of hardworking individuals are not getting a voice. Thousands of drivers have to fight to get the rights they deserve. Today I join your fight. Today I refuse to sit in the shadows while the hardworking suffer. I officially join the United Taxi-Driver Community Council. ■

BENEFITS AND SERVICES

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: GOUTCC.ORG FOR DETAILS

LOSS OF ONE OF OUR OWN: FRED BAPTISTE BATRONY



ON JANUARY 22ND, 2018, WE AT TAXI TOWN HAVE LOST A DRIVER AND A FRIEND, FRED BAPTISTE BATRONY. FRED TRAGICALLY PASSED AWAY ON MONDAY MORNING IN HIS CAB DUE TO AN APPARENT HEART ATTACK. FRED JOINED TAXI TOWN IN JUNE OF 2012 AND WAS A LOYAL MEMBER OF OUR DRIVER FAMILY. FRED HAD AN OUTGOING PERSONALITY AND WAS CONSIDERED A FRIEND BY MANY OF OUR DRIVERS.

UNFORTUNATELY, NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FRED'S PERSONAL LIFE AWAY FROM THE TAXICAB BUSINESS. WE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN CONTACTING A RELATIVE OR A CLOSE FRIEND OF FRED. WE ASK THAT ANYONE WITH ANY INFORMATION THAT COULD HELP IN THIS ENDEAVOR PLEASE CONTACT KEVIN AT TAXI TOWN (773-465-9000)

City Study Mystery Resolved

BY CHRIS CHANDLER

ALD. ANTHONY BEALE ANNOUNCED ON June 19, 2016 that he would name a commission to make a six month independent study to determine if fingerprinting was discriminatory.

A majority of aldermen supported fingerprinting the Uber and Lyft drivers just as cab drivers were, as a matter of public safety. Uber spokesmen, including former Attorney General Eric Holder, had argued that fingerprinting would be unfair to minority communities, who have more interactions with police. So after a heated meeting with mayoral staff, Beale announced the six month delay for the study.

To this date, a year and a half later, we still have not seen such a study. And never will. Why would that be?

In early 2017 Beale told the *Sun-Times* the report was showing that fingerprinting was in fact discriminatory. The UTCC called his office to see the report, and we were referred to the Marilyn Katz P.R. agency, where a spokesman said the study «was still being worked on.

We called back on the one year anniversary of his announcement, and were told by a staff member it was being worked on. Two months later Beale announced that the city had taken over the study, and contracted with the University of Illinois Chicago.

On Nov. 6, a year and a half later, we finally

got the study.

“A statistical Analysis of TNP and Taxi Drivers Behaviors and Public Safety Outcomes,” by assistant professor Benjamin Feingenberg of the economics department.

But the study does not mention the words race or discrimination. It says it will not compare efficiency, and refers that matter to footnotes, The only applicable footnote, a study by Phoenix, shows the alternatives to fingerprinting were “incomplete.” Instead it compares cab drivers and ride share drivers on irrelevant data such as red light tickets. (see full study in last issue).

So why couldn't Ald. Beale or city officials produce a discrimination study ? We finally figured it out. Any such study would have to look at how the background checks were used in making hiring decisions. A careful lawyer like Holder would have checked out how past criminal records were used in hiring Chicago cab drivers., and one clause clearly stands out as unfair to minorities; barring employment for those convicted of possession of a small amount of pot.

The Chicago Municipal Code reads: under chauffeur's license qualifications:

- 15. “Has not, within a five year period preceding the application, been convicted by a court of any jurisdiction, under parole, under any supervisions or any similar de-

ferral program, or subject to conditional discharge for any of the following offenses

- i. i) Any felony as defined by Article 2 of the Illinois Criminal Code of 2012, codified at 720 ILCS 5/2-, et seq.0.5.
- ii. ii) the illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance or cannabis
- iii. operating a motor vehicle under the influence of a controlled substance or cannabis;
- iv. indecent solicitation of a child or any criminal sexual abuse or similar crime; or any crime involving moral turpitude,”

(Chicago Municipal Code, Title 9, Vehicles, Chapter 9-050 Public Chauffeurs, License Qualifications, item 15)

The conditions all appear reasonable except item “ii) The illegal sale or possession of any controlled substance or cannabis” Many studies have shown vastly disproportionate conviction of minorities for possession of cannabis.

The obvious solution would be to amend the item to read “The illegal sale of a controlled substance.” But Mayor Emanuel did not want to solve the fingerprint problem He wanted to get rid of them altogether. That's why he could not find anybody to do a study who would not look at how the city used the background information, and how it could be improved. ■

UBER, LYFT AND FINGERPRINTS: THIS BLOG'S FOR BEALE

REPRINTED FROM WHOSDRIVINGYOU.ORG

A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, CHICAGO ALDERMAN Anthony Beale announced he had the votes to require that Uber and Lyft drivers undergo fingerprint-based criminal background checks to drive in the city.

Beale was going to do it.

Uber's lobbyists and Mayor Rahm Emanuel went on high alert to prevent this from happening. Ultimately, after much tussling, Beale agreed to wait six months (or so) until a University of Illinois at Chicago study could independently determine whether or not Uber and Lyft drivers should undergo fingerprinting.

Six months went by. A year passed: no study.

Finally, Beale demanded to see it. And now it's arrived.

Two things grab your attention about this study, which was just released by the Emanuel administration.

The first is: It is reportedly six pages long. One, two, three, four, five, six.

Wonder if that includes footnotes?

The second thing is: It doesn't address fingerprinting at all.

Beale declared himself “speechless” upon receipt of the document.

In side-stepping fingerprinting, the anticipat-



ed study reportedly mealy mouths something along the lines of “other studies had looked at background check systems for each of the industries.”

Wonder if the report's findings were inconvenient?

Hmm.

You know what, Mr. Beale? Forget reports.

In the intervening period since the University of Illinois at Chicago report was commissioned there now exists bulletproof data grounded in reality from two states: Maryland and Massachusetts.

Maryland recently declared it's rejected almost 15% of a batch of 24,608 already approved Uber and Lyft drivers because of disqualifying criminal histories and driving records.

Maryland conducts what it calls “supplemental” government background checks of Uber and Lyft drivers. Tori Leonard, spokesperson for the Maryland regulator , stated: “The fact that we are rejecting a significant number on secondary review demonstrates a solid justification for our supplemental review process, which is above and beyond what most other states do.”

Massachusetts previously announced its own supplemental government background check of approved Uber and Lyft drivers rejected more than 8,200 of 71,000 driver applications.

Bottom line: Maryland and Massachusetts have conducted government background checks on approved Uber and Lyft drivers and rejected them by the thousands in order to protect the passenger public.

This is the best proof anyone could ask for. ■

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: GOUTCC.ORG

REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Driver's Suicide Reveals the Dark Side of the Gig Economy

BY GINIA BELLAFANTE ON FEB. 6, 2018

LAST SPRING, BHAIRAVI DESAI, A middle-aged woman without a driver's license and thus an unlikely leader for thousands of mostly male drivers in the world's largest market for hired vehicles, delivered emotional testimony in front of New York City's Taxi & Limousine Commission about the mounting existential difficulties in her field.

The executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, Ms. Desai had been a labor activist for 21 years but she had never seen anything like the despair she was witnessing now — the bankruptcies, foreclosures and eviction notices plaguing drivers who were calling her with questions about how to navigate homelessness and paralyzing depression.

"Half my heart is just crushed," she said, "and the other half is on fire."

The economic hardship that Uber and its competitors had inflicted on conventional drivers in New York and London and other cities had become overwhelming. For decades there had been no more than 12,000 to 13,000 taxis in New York but now there were myriad new ways to avoid public transportation, in some cases with ride-hailing services like Via that charged little more than \$5 to travel in Manhattan. In 2013, there were 47,000 for-hire vehicles in the city. Now there were more than 100,000, approximately two-thirds of them affiliated with Uber.

While Uber has sold that "disruption" as positive for riders, for many taxi workers, it has been devastating. Between 2013 and 2016, the gross annual bookings of full-time yellow-taxi drivers in New York, working during the day when fares are typically highest, fell from \$88,000 a year to just over \$69,000. Medallions, which grant the right to operate a taxi in New York City, were now depreciating assets and drivers who had borrowed money to pay for them, once a sound investment strategy, were deeply in debt. Ms. Desai was routinely seeing grown men cry and she had become increasingly concerned about the possibility that they would begin taking their lives.

On Monday morning, Doug Schifter, a livery driver in his early 60s, killed himself with a shot-



Left: Bhairavi Desai, Right: Doug Schifter, a New York livery driver, said he killed himself to illuminate how ride hailing services have devastated taxi workers financially.

gun in front of City Hall in Lower Manhattan, having written a lengthy Facebook post several hours earlier laying out the structural cruelties that had left him in such dire circumstance. He was now sometimes forced to work more than 100 hours a week to survive, he said; when he had started out in the 1980s, a 40-hour week was fairly typical. He blamed politicians — mayors Michael R. Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo — and their acquiescence to the rich for permitting so many cars to flood the streets. He blamed the Taxi Commission for the fines and hassles it imposed.

He had lost his health insurance and accrued credit card debt and he would no longer work for "chump change," preferring, he said, to die in the hope that his sacrifice would draw attention to what drivers, too often unable to feed their families now, were enduring. He had forecast all of this doom in columns he had written for a trade publication called Black Car News, he wrote, but few had listened to him.

Implicit in his testament was the anger he felt over the de-professionalization of his life's work. Mr. Schifter had driven more than five million miles throughout his tenure, through five hurricanes and 50 snowstorms. He had chauffeured celebrities and worn a suit. He was not driving a car to supplement the income he was getting

from his crepe business and he was not trying to make a little extra money for a gym membership. He was not a participant in the gig economy; he was a casualty of it.

For at least a century, the suicide as spectacle, prompted by a reversal of fortune, has typically been the practice of the wealthy. In the months after Wall Street's crash in 1929, four people threw themselves out windows in New York (leading to the folklore that there had been many, many more such deaths). Decades later, Bernie Madoff's son Mark hanged himself from a dog leash in his SoHo apartment. In 2016, Sanjay Valvani, a hedge fund manager accused of insider trading, slashed his throat in the bedroom of his

Brooklyn townhouse, to much sensation in the tabloid and financial press. Poverty too often kills you without making you try.

In response to Mr. Schifter's death, Mayor de Blasio showed little sensitivity to the psychic harms of economic deprivation. "Let's face it, for someone to commit suicide there's an underlying mental health challenge," he said. Uber declined to comment.

For taxi drivers staring down an even bleaker future of driverless cars at a moment when Washington considers a weekly paycheck bump of \$1.50 an occasion to break out the layer cake, it is hard to see where the metaphoric Prozac will come from.

The problems facing the city's taxi drivers have become so bad, Ms. Desai said, that even on New Year's Eve many complained that they roamed around unable to pick up fares. At about that time she had received a call from a woman who runs a community radio station in the Bronx, with an audience made up mostly of Dominican livery drivers. Two drivers that the host knew of had killed themselves and other drivers were on the show talking about the isolation and fear they saw all around them.

In the days preceding his death, Mr. Schifter wrote about his decreasing faith in our politics and about his commitments to his spiritual life. "Forget the cliché you only live once it is not true," he said in a Facebook post. "The clues are all about you if you take the time to seek them." ■

Katie Joins Staff

KATIE HALL JOINED THE UTCC TEAM in December of 2017 in the role as his Administrative Assistant. Her broad office operations experience combined with paralegal and even marketing experience, has quickly proven to be the perfect fit for UTCC

Katie transitioned from an award winning Fine Art career in High School to pursue Graphic Design in College and graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago. At UIC she was admitted in to an exclusive internship program and assisted the Congressional Research Service (CRS) a branch of the federal government that assists congress members in the research needed to create effective legislation, with their re-branding campaign. This experience secured immediate employment post-graduation and Katie was hired as a professional



Graphic Designer in the Real Estate sector, most notably at Century 21 Sussex & Reilly in 2001 and the Shimmy Braun/Tom Fishwick team at Guaranteed Rate. With Katie's assistance this team doubled their numbers in less than 3 years.

Soon after, from 2010 to 2015, Katie took her first position in the legal sector as a pre-foreclosure, short sale



processor at the Law Offices of Pissetzky & Berliner. This role blended her altruistic spirit with her technical real estate processing and contract negotiation skill set. During her tenure she assisted over 150 families avoid foreclosure, which secured their future financial recovery as well as lessened the blow for other homeowners in their surrounding community.

In Katie's free time she spends time with her 10 year old daughter, mother and diverse network of friends. She is also a member of Harvest Bible Chapel, downtown Cathedral. She loves to cook as a creative outlet and recently begun to revisit her art talent with small multi-media pieces that reference biblical scripture and themes. Attached is one of the examples. ■



Hundreds of peace loving drivers come to say goodbye to Ismail Abdulle on his last Journey on the Bohemian National Cemetery December 27th, 2018 at 1:30pm



Tens of peace loving people showed up at Markham Courthouse to stand up for justice at to Ismail Abdulle's Court Preceding



After the Court Preceding the attorney speaks with the group about the legal preceding for the case

COURT UPDATE

UTCC attended the court sessions for the perpetrator Francisco Ojeda who viciously murder our beloved friend Ismail Abdulle. On Wednesday, January 31st, 2018 the court moved to charge Ojeda on the following charges: murder in the first degree, robbery, kidnapping, vehicle hijacking, and mutilating on the first degree. After the court session, State Attorney Mescall stated that the case is a discovery stage. The state will have six months to submit all the evidence to the defense attorney. The perpetrator will stay in custody as long as the court case continues with no possibility of release. The next court date is 9 am March 15th, 2018 at Markham Courthouse at 16501 South Kedzie Markham, Illinois 60428(Room 106). UTCC is urging all peace-loving people to attend the court procedure till justice prevails for Ismail Abdulle.

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OPINION

One Way to Protect the CTA From Uber, Lyft: Use Tech

BY ERIC MATHIASSEN ON JANUARY 31, 2018

IN HIS RECENT ARTICLE “WHAT KILLED THE CTA? TWO FOUR-LETTER words,” Greg Hinz identifies ride share companies such as Uber and Lyft as prime movers for ridership declines at the Chicago Transit Authority in recent years.

I was an early fan of Uber but have significantly reduced my use of it over the past year. I think rideshare companies create a long-term negative for dense, pre-automobile cities such as Chicago, New York, San Francisco, etc., and I also realized that, in accommodating ride-share companies that started off as scofflaws, the City of Chicago has demolished taxi medallion owners’ equity stake in their medallions.

We don’t often think of taxi drivers as small business owners, but for drivers who own their own medallion, that is what they are. The city’s actions have had terrible consequences for hundreds, if not thousands, of those small business owners. Is there any other industry where the city would get off scot-free destroying hundreds of thousands of dollars of small business equity?

While Greg Hinz mentioned in passing the added congestion from Uber and Lyft in his article, as someone who works in the Loop and lives in River North, I’ve noticed central area traffic being seriously worse in the past three years or so. I have to believe it’s from Uber/Lyft. I used to be able to use a taxi to run home during the day from my office near Union Station to my home at Huron/Lasalle in less than 10 minutes each way, except in special cases. Now I’m lucky if the trip only takes 10 minutes, and I’ve frequently had one or both directions take over 20 minutes due to congestion. And at evening rush, I can often walk home faster (in 23 minutes) than a car can get me there. As a software engineer who has worked both at big companies and startups here in Chicago, I know that the technology exists for ride-share companies to calculate taxes at different rates for different trips. I think it would help both the CTA, and traffic in general, if all ride-share trips starting or ending in the Central Area (as defined in the Central Area Action Plan), incur a per-passenger tax of the amount of CTA’s rail fare. That uses a stick to encourage riders to take transit when commuting to the Loop, generates needed funds for the CTA even when riders don’t use it, and would almost entirely function as a very progressive tax, avoiding penalizing people in far-out neighborhoods who neither live nor work in the Central Area.

Would you move to Wisconsin to save 10 minutes?

The reality is that even though ride-sharing is popular with many people, it creates the most value in areas like the far south or far north sides where there are fewer, and less frequent, public transit options. On the contrary, trips starting and/or ending in the Central Area are well-served by transit. Outside of the Central Area, using the same location tech, the tax could be some fraction of the CTAfare- equivalent rate for rides that both start and end within 1/4 mile of CTA rail stations. This encourages people to choose the efficiencies and sunk costs of existing transit, helping keep roadways less congested for drivers who don’t have convenient access to CTA rail. Uber and Lyft are revolutionizing transportation with the use of their location-aware service. The city should take advantage of that same technology to help ensure transit remains a viable option for the entire city. Transit is a key differentiator for Chicago— especially in the Central Area—and failing to aggressively protect it will only lead to bad things for Chicago in the long term. ■

Eric Mathiasen is a software engineer for Signal but all statements and opinions are his own. He has lived in Chicago since 1995.

TAXI TOWN



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GET INVOLVED IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST UNJUST FEES & TAXES!

Join the fight for rights, respect & human dignity!

CALL UTCC: 773-342-8822

Convention Schedule

EVENT NAME	VENUE	START	END	ATTENDEES
MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE 2018 FOUNDERS WEEK	Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza River North	2/5/2018	2/10/2018	750
ALPHA KAPPA PSI 2018	Palmer House Hilton	2/9/2018	2/10/2018	600
PIKE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2018	Hilton Chicago	2/9/2018	2/11/2018	450
AZ 2018 NATIONAL CVMD MEETING	McCormick Place West	2/12/2018	2/16/2018	2,850
ANNUAL CEO CONFERENCE 2018	Hilton Chicago	2/12/2018	2/18/2018	900
ROCKFON FEBUARY MEETING	The Chicago Athletic Association Hotel	2/12/2018	2/15/2018	70
NASP 49TH ANNUAL CONVENTION	Hyatt Regency Chicago	2/13/2018	2/16/2018	6,000
2018 ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM	Palmer House Hilton	2/19/2018	2/23/2018	600
2018 CENTRAL DIVISION ANNUAL MEETING	Palmer House Hilton	2/20/2018	2/27/2018	900
ANNUAL MEETING - CENTRAL CONFERENCE	Hyatt Regency O'Hare	2/22/2018	2/25/2018	250
CHICAGO DENTAL SOCIETY MIDWINTER MEETING	McCormick Place West	2/22/2018	2/24/2018	30,000
LMT COMMUNICATIONS 2018 LAB DAY PROGRAM	Hyatt Regency Chicago	2/22/2018	2/24/2018	2,000
2018 SAVIOURS' DAY CONVENTION, ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATION OF ISLAM	McCormick Place North	2/23/2018	2/25/2018	5,000
ABA TECHSHOW 2018	Hilton Chicago	3/5/2018	3/11/2018	450
INTERNATIONAL HOME + HOUSEWARES SHOW 2018	McCormick Place North & South & Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	3/10/2018	3/13/2018	59,000
ENDO 2018	McCormick Place West	3/17/2018	3/20/2018	7,500
SSO 2018 CANCER SYMPOSIUM	Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	3/21/2018	3/24/2018	1,500
BOA 2018 SHAMROCK SHUFFLE	McCormick Place North	3/23/2018	3/25/2018	20,000
2018 CONGRESS ON HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP	Hyatt Regency Chicago	3/26/2018	3/29/2018	4,000
TESOL 2018 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXPO	McCormick Place North, Lakeside Center at McCormick Place	3/27/2018	3/30/2018	6,500

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: GOUTCC.ORG

ALL DRIVERS UNITE!

The leadership in UTCC organization have long had a vision for the future of the transportation industry in the City of Chicago. Every year, we hear about two or three drivers found dead in their vehicle – from heart attacks or strokes.

Recently, we heard that another long-time taxi driver in the city found dead in his cab, Mr. Fred Batrony. Almost at the same time, another Flash driver has passed away, Mr. Anwar Syed, and last Christmas Eve, our beloved Ismail Abdulle was brutally murdered.

IS THIS THE RETIRMENT PLAN THE CITY HAS FOR US?



Mr. Syed

Mr. Abdulle

Mr. Batrony

WHEN INJUSTICE BECOMES LAW, RESISTANCE BECOMES DUTY

Drivers are Stronger Together

- Together we can force more regulations on Ride Sharing (Uber, Lyft)**
 - Together we can get better legal representation at 400 W. Superior**
 - Together we can get retirement plans (401K), credit unions for financial services, college funds, & small business loans**
 - Together we can stop the excessive ticketing of drivers in the city**
 - Together we can demand adoption of a Bill of Rights for all drivers**
 - Together we can get affordable health care**
 - Together we can fight for our worker's and human rights:**
- WE ARE NOT SLAVES!**

TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT!

FINANCIAL ESSENTIALS

IDENTITY THEFT: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BY ROCKY OROK, FINANCIAL PLANNER

Part 2 of 2

ACCORDING TO A 2015 study by Javelin Strategy and Research, about 13.1 million Americans had their identity stolen; the highest number in six years losing a total of about \$15 billion to fraudsters.

As individual consumers, we have all heard on the radio or TV and must have read it in the papers or the internet that nobody can absolutely stop or prevent identity theft.

However, there are some things you can do to reduce your risk and protect yourself from identity theft. Most of these safety practices, some of which are mostly common sense can help protect you from getting your identity stolen.

Protect your Social Security Number (SSN)

Never carry your social security card in your wallet, always leave it at home locked in a safe place. Make sure you don't have any other personal information like your date of birth, account number, pin number or password in your wallet. Limit what you carry to things like identification and credit or debit cards

Do not give out your SSN to anyone except you know for what purposes and if it will be safeguarded and not be shared. You can give it out for valid reasons like tax preparation, employment or credit approval. Don't give out any of your personal information on the phone unless you initiated the call or know that it's from a trusted source. You can never tell who is on the other end of the line.

Review and monitor your bank and credit card statements:

Make sure to check your bank and credit card statements regularly and carefully to enable you detect any discrepancy or suspicious activity no matter how small and take action immediately. Some theft occurs with small amounts of money being charged over a long period of time to avoid detection. It's advisable to review your bank and credit card statements at least once a week to be ahead of the game and sign up for alerts from your bank to receive text messages when a withdrawal above a certain amount is made.

Other ways to keep yourself safe on line is to limit what financial information you have on your PC. Preferably, use one PC to conduct online financial transactions.

Use a cross shredder to shred any documents with personal or financial information. Shred checks, bank statements, insurance forms, medical forms or any similar documents if you don't need them any longer and any application for pre-approved credit cards that you don't intend to apply for should be shredded.

Check your credit report annually:

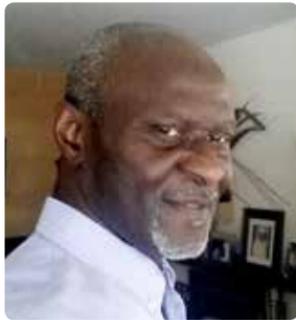
Check your credit report annually for suspicious activity. You are entitled to one free credit report once a year. Make sure to order your free copy of your credit report from www.Annualcreditreport.com or by calling 877-322-8228.

You can also order your credit report by contacting any one of the three major consumer credit reporting companies namely,

Equifax - 1800-349-9960

Experian- 1-888-397-3742

TransUnion- 1-888-909-8872



If you find any suspicious activity, quickly contact your credit card company or the creditor immediately.

Be cautious of prescreened and pre-approved offers of credit cards and insurance by mail. You can opt out of prescreened offers for 5 years or permanently by calling 1-888-567-8688 or online at www.optoutprescreen.com. The phone number and website is operated by the 3 nationwide credit reporting companies. You can also take your name off marketers' hit list by adding your name to the Do-Not-Call registry at 1-888-382-1222.

Protect your information online:

Most people now conduct their banking and shopping on line and some of these users don't have the knowledge of how to protect themselves from online danger. Know who to share and what to share on line. Make sure your computer has comprehensive security suite that can protect against online threats with up to date anti-virus, anti-spam, anti-malware, spyware and firewall installed on it. Don't forget to always update your software when prompted.

Most criminals use a method known as "phishing" by posing as legitimate businesses on line sending out fraudulent email with links to trick you out of disclosing personal and financially sensitive information. Some of these emails may contain your name, address, phone number and even family information. Examples of phishing include fake unsolicited emails, look alike unsecured websites, pop-up windows, downloads, fake links or any combination of this. Most legitimate businesses won't email you to ask you for your passwords or account number.

Avoid clicking on links or attachments in email if you are not sure of the sender. When in doubt, call the sender or company to confirm. Links, attachments, pop-up windows and downloads are some of the ways that these harmful programs can install malware on your computer and from there can steal your information and passwords thereby having possible access to your personal data like your credit and banking information

Create strong passwords

The increase in online banking and shopping by most people now makes it easier for the identity thief to steal their finances with just a username and password. Create strong passwords that are at least 9 or more characters long, containing at least one uppercase and lowercase letter, one number and one special character because there are computer programs that are able to guess passwords. Avoid using words from the dictionary and other common passwords like pet names or the like. Do not use variations of one, make sure different sites have different passwords and change your passwords as frequently as possible. Never save your password on any financial site and make sure to have a screen security on all your electronic devices.

Social Media

With the advent of numerous social media sites like Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn etc, more and more people are exchanging unprecedented levels of personal information on line without weighing it against the risk and benefits of social

networking. Most thieves are using social media sites to collect volume data about consumers and using those data to steal their identities.

They use a method known as "spear phishing". And this is not the sport you think, this is a scam that thrives on familiarity. The scammers knows your name, email address, and some other personal information about you including your friends and family list from your social media postings enough to personalize the message as if it came from one of your friends or family. They may enquire about the new bike you bought from an online retail site and then ask you for the password to your photo page. When you respond with the password, they will then use that password and other variations to try to access your account on that online retail site. If they succeed, they'll use it to make purchases on your account. They can also use the same information to pose as somebody from the online retailer and request that you reset your password, user-ID, PIN or re-verify your credit card number. This ultimately results in financial setback.

It's essential to curtail the amount of information about your presence on social networking sites to reduce the potential of identity theft. Remember; never give up too much personal information on line like your SSN, address, and birth date or mothers maiden name. Such information could be used to answer challenge questions, thereby giving them access to your account.

Public Wi-Fi

Be cautious when using public Wi-Fi. Because they are unsecured, thieves are getting better at hacking into the network and intercepting your information. It's advisable not to do any online banking or financial transaction in a public Wi-Fi location.

Wait until you get home to your secure wireless network to conduct financial transactions.

IRS Scam

The IRS would never request for personal or financial information by email or social media. Any email purported to be from the IRS requesting for information is always a scam. In addition, any unexpected phone call from someone claiming to be an IRS agent, either threatening you with arrest or deportation if you fail to pay immediately is a scam.

Any such scam should be reported to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484 or on line at IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting.

Most IRS transactions are done by mail.

Other methods of protection include:

Never share your health care plan with anyone offering free health products or services.

Deface or destroy personal information on prescription labels before throwing them out.

Make sure your mailbox is always secure and promptly remove mail from your mailbox.

Request a vacation hold on your mail if you have to travel or be away from home for a long time.

Avoid putting any sensitive personal or financial information on you phone.

Before you dispose off a desktop, laptop or phone, make sure to delete or wipe out your personal information. You can defrag the hard drive or use a good wipe utility program to overwrite the hard drive, ■

ANNOUNCEMENT!

UTCC wins a huge victory for all drivers

The taxi reforms developed by the Mayor's Task Force and included in this year's budget will bring some much-needed help to Chicago's taxicab business.

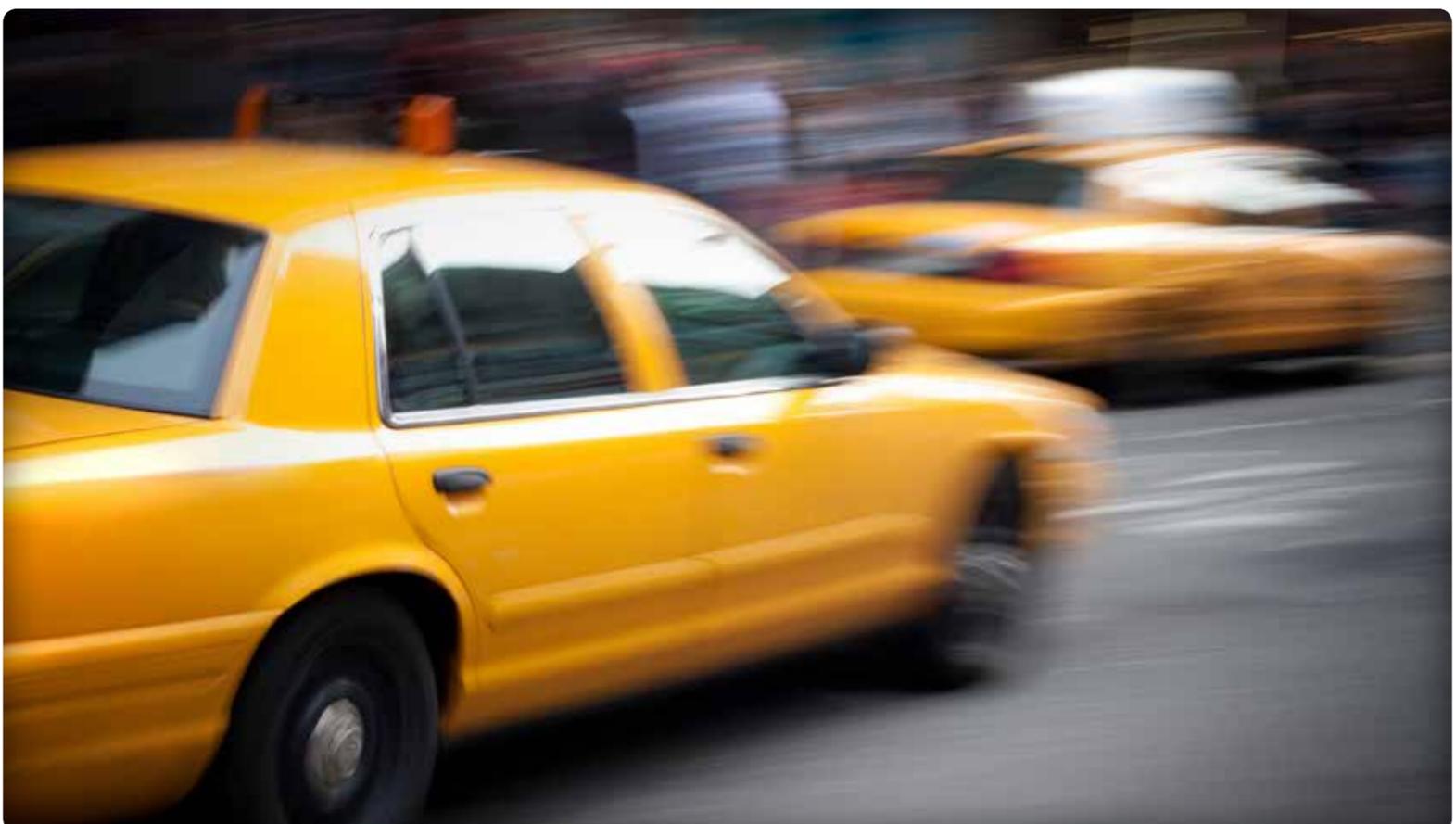
UTCC members on the Task Force played a leadership role for many of these reforms, one so-called reform injected at the last minutes by the City is aimed at weakening the case for fingerprinting ride-share drivers...in other words, helping our competition. But most of the remaining reforms really will help the industry in the following way:

- 1. Reduce fines for medallion owners**
- 2. Have one inspection per year for vehicles 5 years or newer**
- 3. Provides more protection to owners in case of foreclosure**
- 4. Give more chances for lease drivers to win free medallions**
- 5. Increase penalties and fines to solicitors at both airports and authorize cease-and-desist orders to root them out**
- 6. Expands vehicle age limits to 10 years**
- 7. Allows single medallion owners to be independent without any affiliation and lease their taxis**
- 8. New vehicles in service must have no more than 125,000 miles**

UTCC and its leadership won this victory through meeting with Aldermen and through advocacy and speaking out to the media and building coalitions.

Let's keep the momentum going, join our visionary bunch! So, we may have more victories!

TOGETHER, WE CAN DO IT!





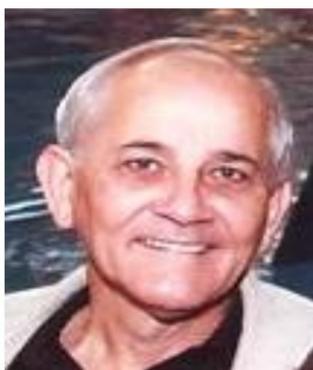
American, Blue Diamond, Checker, Yellow
and the

UTCC VOICE

Seldom do we show the recognition, yet alone the appreciation, for work done on a daily basis on our behalf by others, and for the most part without compensation. The UTCC is such an entity.

Realizing the need for honest and accurate communication in the taxi industry, and our industry currently having no other reliable communication network, to assist in that effort our affiliations have agreed to collect membership dues on behalf of the UTCC.

While we realize that we will not always agree on our needs, we do agree that we will concur on most decisions. Accurate information is a must and we commend the UTCC on its efforts to disseminate information to both drivers and owners.



Drivers can request dues (\$2 per week) to be collected and remitted on their behalf.

John D. Moberg

**For more information call
773-342-8822 or 312-225-5411**