

GLOBAL NEWS



10-YEAR OLD BOY URGES THIEVES TO BURN AUSSIE CAB DRIVER

In a shocking incident in Adelaide, Australia, a boy thought to be aged no more than 10 yelled “burn him, burn him” during a terrifying assault on a taxi driver in the small Australian town of Wingfield. The boy urged two men in the taxi with him to torch the driver while they robbed him of his takings. They had earlier hailed the cab for the local journey.

The operations manager of Independent Taxis, who the driver worked for, spoke with him after the incident and told Taxi Globe that the attack was just too unbelievable and totally horrific. After arriving at their destination, one of the men in the back of the cab with the boy slipped a rope around the driver’s neck and ordered him to give them his money. He gave them A\$80 that he had in his top pocket. Then the boy pulled back the driver’s hair and said: “Give us all the money.”

The Manager then shocked Taxi Globe’s battle-hardened reporter when telling us that they then poured petrol over the driver’s head and took out a box of matches. Meanwhile, the boy yelled: “burn him, burn him”. Fortunately, the driver escaped by pulling the rope off his head and running from his attackers. He called police on his mobile phone and hid nearby while the men and boy burnt his taxi. “He is in absolute shock, he just couldn’t believe a boy so young could be involved,” the manager added.

A search by a police helicopter and sniffer dogs failed to find the men and boy. The Port Adelaide police searched local houses and spoke to numerous people about the assault, but failed to find anything. The South Australian Taxi Association and Independent Taxis had an urgent meeting with an Adelaide Government minister to discuss safety issues and all Adelaide licensed taxis must now have cameras installed.

AN INDIAN DEATH WAITING TO HAPPEN...

There are a multitude of what we in London would call touts driving the streets of Calcutta, India. However few would pass even a basic MoT test in London and it is unlikely that even one car would scrape through a London taxi overhaul at SGS. An accident caused by a rogue cab purely due to its unroadworthy condition has long been on the Calcutta cards. Now it has happened, bringing a tragic premature death to a young 17-year old girl, Soumyadipta Chatterjee.

With his wipers not working and no tread on the tyres, a ‘cab’ driver racing down the road in blinding rain saw, too late, a car approaching from the opposite direction. He slammed on what brakes he had, skidded, climbed the pavement and hit Soumyadipta as she was returning home from an early school class. The impact flung the student of a south Calcutta school high into the air. Had she landed on the road, she might have survived, but she landed on the taxi bonnet and as it crashed into the wall of a nearby house, it also crushed her to death.

Three passengers in the cab were injured, but they survived, although one is in a precarious condition. The driver escaped unhurt and was immediately arrested. The problem is that there are so many rogue taxis prowling the city streets, with callous drivers not bothering to stick to the basic maintenance of their vehicles.

“The cab that killed the girl should not have been on the road as anything, let alone as a cab,” said the officer-in-charge of the local police station, “it was criminal to drive that vehicle in a downpour with no wipers and tyres that lacked grip.” The driver admitted that his wipers were not working. He claimed not to have realised the tyre’s condition. Yet he did have an MoT of sorts for his car. How? A police spokesman told Taxi Globe that bribery was rampant in some administration offices...

FOLLOWING THE USA MARKETS WITH YOUR LOCAL CAB DRIVER!

You’ve seen taxi drivers with cell phones, but how about a taxi driver with a trading desk in the front seat? When the traffic lights turn red or traffic backs up, New York cab driver Carlos Rubino becomes a stock market trader, scanning real-time quotes of his favourite stocks as they spew across a PalmPilot terminal linked to the Internet and mounted next to his steering wheel. “It’s kind of stressful,” he told Taxi Globe, “but I like it and I’m used to it.”

If you are desperate to know how a particular stock is doing, Rubino is always happy to look up quotes for his passengers. Yahoo, Amazon.com and America Online are the most requested ones. He even lets customers use his laptop to send emails from the back seat! “Instead of a trading desk, he’s got a dashboard,” says Drew Ladner, one of Mr Rubino’s passengers. A few months ago, three sellers of parts for the Boeing Corporation hopped into his cab. They were talking about the company’s stock, so Rubino went online to check the news for them. Sure enough, Boeing had just inked a big deal with some European airlines. The three immediately clicked on their cell phones and put in ‘buy’ orders for Boeing shares. “They were happy,” says the 42-year-old cabby, “the fare was \$14, but they gave me \$50!”

Aware of a law prohibiting cabbies from using cell phones while driving, Carlos extends that rule to his trading. “I stop the cab at the side of the road if I have to make a trade,” he says, “it’s safety first.” Carlos has been driving his cab since 1987 and started trading shares a few years ago. His curiosity grew as he began to educate himself by reading business publications. The Wall Street brokers he picks up are usually impressed with his knowledge, but the feeling isn’t always mutual. “Some of them don’t know too much,” he says, “they buy what people tell them to buy - they’re like toll collectors.”

Will he ever give up his brokerage firm on wheels for a stationary job? Not likely, though he claims a 70 percent return on his investments since January and he says he makes \$1,800 a week driving his cab - more than he does trading. “Besides,” he adds, “why go somewhere and have a boss?”

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