

GLOBAL NEWS



CANADIAN CABS NOT 'ZOOMING' ANYWHERE!

The recent collapse of the UK / Canadian airline, Zoom, ruined the holidays for many who were using the low-cost airline. It also did very little to promote the name of the cab trade in Canada either.

Passengers had been stranded at airports after Zoom went bust, thanks mainly to the escalating cost of fuel. About 200 Zoom Airlines passengers were stuck at Halifax International Airport (Nova Scotia) after being caught up in the financial collapse of the discount air carrier. They had been there since the previous night after being told that mechanical faults were causing a delay.

The flight loaded up but never took off again. "I don't want to spend another night in Halifax. I just want to get home," one irate passenger said as she dragged her luggage through the airport looking for a flight to Ottawa after almost a day aboard a Zoom jet. By then it was close to midnight when passengers finally learned they were to disembark the aircraft and spend the night at area hotels.

"We thought we were stopping in Halifax for 45 minutes and ended up sitting in the aircraft on the tarmac for about seven hours," passenger Henry Bailes said of the delay. With only one shuttle bus with capacity for about eight passengers to take the exhausted travellers to local hotels, their nightmare was continuing. But it got worse when some passengers - fed up with waiting for the shuttle - decided to get taxis to the hotels instead. The cabbies waiting for fares, refused to take the Zoom passengers to nearby hotels because like at any airport, they were hoping for more lucrative trips into town. Passenger Jeff Cosman, who was travelling with his wife Judi and five children, said that the taxis refused to budge even though the families had children in tow and it was dark and raining.

"By the time we then had to wait for the shuttle to return, all the hotel rooms had been taken," said Mr Cosman, "so we had to go downtown." One driver, John Leumi, told Taxi Globe: "We felt bad about the refusal, but there was only one flight left to come in and we had already been at the airport for several hours. We'd have lost our place in the cab queue and ended the day with virtually nothing. As much as we wanted to help, we also have to live. Had the shuttle not been working, it might have made a difference, but it was."

OZ TAXI DRIVERS IN FEAR OF 8-YEAR-OLD KIDS!

Aussie men may have the reputation of being big, strong and fearless, but the taxi drivers of Sydney's suburban towns, Redfern and Marrickville, weren't quite so adventurous having been terrorised in their cabs by young

thugs who had violently attacked them and stolen their takings. Local police told Taxi Globe that they had identified three loosely organised gangs whose members were aged between eight and 16 as being responsible for most of the 50+ attacks on the taxis. These boys, according to the police, made up for their youth and diminutive size by attacking in large groups and using what police called the "ape effect." That's to say they attack the driver simultaneously and overwhelm him, some punching, others ripping at the driver's clothes and stealing whatever they can get their hands on.

In some cases, the attackers jump up and down on the cab, smashing windows while the older boys steal the keys, physically attacking the driver while the younger boys tear at his clothes to rob him. One 33 old cabbie described an attack on him by a group of youths as "terrifying." His driver's window was smashed with a rock before he was besieged by a group of youths. "I thought they were going to kill me," he said. One boy identified from surveillance pictures as playing a key role in at least one robbery is just 10 years old, yet the attack on the unnamed driver, which was captured by his cab's security camera, is not the boy's first criminal activity. Police say he has been committing serious crimes for about two years and believe him to be responsible for stealing cars as well as snatch-and-grabs at intersections.

The gang's average age is 14 and those believed to be the leaders are only 15 or 16, though they are already considered to be experienced criminals. However, children under 10 are deemed too young to be charged and police say restrictions on investigating those between 10 and 15 make arrests difficult. Perhaps even sadder, officers told The Globe, was that when they confronted the 10-year-old about his activities, he was quite brazen, revealing that he knew how far police could go with a person of his age.

ROBBING BANKS BY AMERICAN CAB!

A convicted bank robber who had escaped from prison following a weekend release program, robbed six banks in less than three weeks, always arriving in style by taxi, according to the FBI. Agents were on the lookout for the perpetrator who was supposed to return to prison, but never showed up. Instead, the FBI agents say he took a cab to a bank in a Philadelphia suburb, where he passed a threatening note to a teller. The next day, he did the same and within the following two weeks, hit another four banks using the same method. None of the drivers realised what was going on and all were paid the fare.

One driver, who could not be identified for legal reasons, told Taxi Globe: "Considering how much he is alleged to have stolen, you would have thought he would tip the driver!"

Taxi Air Conditioning

All makes Serviced and Repaired

Mobile Service - We come to you

Tel: 020 8715 0079

Covering London & The Home Counties