

GLOBAL NEWS



“HEY CABBY, \$1,000 TO DUMP MY MUM-IN-LAW’S BODY!”

Sounds ridiculous, but that’s exactly what US cab driver Bao Tran claims he was asked to do recently! Bao told Taxi Globe: “A guy phoned me on my advertised cab-call number. I was expecting a ride to the airport but no; it seemed to be a much better trip than that. He wanted a ride to Las Vegas – about 100 miles down the freeway. It sounded great until he told me that he wanted to go to Vegas so that he could dump his mother-in-law’s body there!”

The caller said he and his wife had been in the United States for nine months caring for his mother-in-law, but they had accidentally overdosed on her medication two days earlier and needed to get rid of the body. The caller said not to worry as he had folded the body in half and put it in a plastic bag so it wouldn’t smell. Mr Tran said they should call the police, but the caller said he didn’t want his wife to go to jail for murder and that’s when he offered the taxi driver \$1,000 to take the body, him and a friend to Las Vegas so they could get rid of it.

Tran said no and hung up. He told a friend about the call next morning and the friend talked Bao into calling the police and telling them about the call. Although the call came from a blocked number, Detective Kevin MacCormick of the local police department managed to get the caller’s number. Soon after, Detective MacCormick said that they had found the person whose phone it was, but that his mother-in-law was fine. He added that he believed the cabby’s story but couldn’t explain what had happened...

PRAGUE CHEATING CABBIES GETTING BETTER!

Several years ago, Taxi Globe reported on the taxi situation in the increasingly popular holiday destination of Prague. Few return disappointed from the Czech capital – except when it comes to using taxis. It isn’t that they are few – it’s the easiest thing in the world to pick one up – it’s just that they tend to make our touts look like good guys!



Taxi Globe went there and had a look for ourselves and was shocked to find scams going on that even our undesirable minicabs haven’t thought of! Ok, re-adjusting the meter to run faster is something that although we can’t do, perhaps some of our unlicensed “friends” might manage to accomplish. But some of the Prague licensed cabbies made that scam look outdated!

Many had two meters, one that runs up to 10-times as quick as the one on show, but which is hidden under the seat until the end of the trip. It is then brought out and the unsuspecting tourist is told that the one they had been watching was “out of date!” The Mayor of Prague, Pavel Bem, told us that they would sort the matter out as a “matter of urgency.” That was then and sure enough, according to many drivers that have been there, the situation has improved greatly. In fact, so sure was Mayor Bem of the clean-up act that he personally went out for a day in disguise using taxis and taking some members of the press with him. He had

issued a warning that any cab driver caught cheating would lose their licence. In fact two drivers checked by Mayor Bem’s team last year who had charged a considerably higher fare than that shown on the meter, are still paying off the high fines imposed on them!

Mayor Bem personally went on his crusade against dishonest taxi drivers around 12 months ago dressed as a smart Italian with a moustache, but this year disguised himself as an English-speaking ‘rocker’ with a goatee beard, a trendy outfit, wearing sun glasses and a baseball cap. He also took the same route as last year from the City Hall in Prague’s Old-Town to the Savoy Hotel near Prague Castle and back. Last year, one driver charged an almost seven times higher fare to Bem, while this time the situation was better with the worst-case driver asking “only” twice more than the regular fare! Several drivers charged exactly the correct sum according to their meter, which apparently pleased Mayor Bem very much.

Though taxi drivers are obliged to always issue a receipt to customers, none of the checked drivers did so. On the other hand, they gave Mr Bem good advice, not only about discos and bars, but also where to buy marijuana in Prague or how much a prostitute costs per night! All useful stuff! Mayor Bem concluded that the situation in Prague had much improved since last year, “...though it would be naive to think that dishonest practices can be completely eradicated overnight.”

The Mayor’s office told Taxi Globe that over the past few years, the Prague Town Hall had trebled the number of taxi drivers’ checks from 550 in 2006 to 1,760 last year. The latest checks had uncovered overcharging in less than 9% of cases, while 18% of the checked drivers committed other offences. The number of regular taxi stands in Prague has also risen and the City Hall has installed information tables in English and German with a price list for the most frequented tourist routes.

Cheating among Prague taxi drivers still goes on, but at least it’s getting better...

NEW YORK CABBY KILLS PASSENGER FOR NOT PAYING FARE...

A New York cab driver pleaded guilty in connection with the death of a man who tried to avoid paying a \$10 taxi fare. The driver, 38-year-old Sam Allen, pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide in Court. He was sentenced to one year in jail.

The District Attorney’s office told Taxi Globe that Allen began arguing with 39-year-old Morton Addams when Addams had refused to pay for his ride. Allen then hit Addams in the leg with a tyre wrench, opening a large wound. Addams was later found slumped on the ground where he had bled to death. Police said that the driver took Addams to a local garage where he then got out and walked away. Allen followed him in his cab, eventually getting out of the car for a confrontation and hitting Addams with the wrench - puncturing an artery. Allen was initially charged with manslaughter and could have received 15 years in prison, but the lesser charge of criminally negligent homicide meant that he received just 12 months...

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