

# GLOBAL NEWS



## The Muslim Cabby And The Jewish Businessman...

Muslim taxi drivers in the USA are finding life a little better than they did in the years following 9/11 when everyone was scared to use them. Even so, the story of the Muslim cab driver from New York and the Jewish passenger from Montreal still makes strange reading.

Canadian Thierry Bellisha and two of his work colleagues had just finished carrying several items of luggage from Hossam Abdalla's taxi at New York's LaGuardia Airport, when Mr Bellisha realised that one case was missing. There were no items of clothing in this case, nor gifts for his family – just valuable diamonds and precious stones! Mr Bellisha suddenly realised what had happened and looked up to see Hossam speeding down the street, completely unaware that he still had a suitcase worth several hundred thousand dollars in the boot of his Yellow cab!

"I screamed and prayed to God like crazy," Bellisha - an Orthodox Jew - recalled when asked his initial reaction. "I just asked God right away to please help me and boy did I need his help!" He even made calls to rabbis in Israel to ask for divine intervention! The distraught trio then returned to their hotel room to see whether the hotel's CCTV could identify the taxi's registration number, however, the dazzling sunshine from that morning had obscured the numbers.

Meanwhile, Hossam was thinking of calling it a day and checked out the cab as he always did. When he reached the boot, he saw what he described as a weird bag. He opened it and found the jewellery. "It was mostly wedding bands, lots and lots of them," said Hossam, "it was just crazy. I've never been in a situation like that before."

The Muslim driver then searched his taxi and amazingly found one of Thierry Bellisha's business cards. The name matched the one on the suitcase, so after a call to the Montreal HQ, Hossam was soon talking to one very relieved businessman! The two men eventually met up at LaGuardia for the switchover. "It was an incredible gesture," Mr Bellisha told Global News, "it was very humanitarian. That cab driver is a perfect lesson for humanity all around the world."

The story made the front page of the New York Daily News, but didn't leave Mr Abdalla feeling like a hero and had him playing down the religious angle. "Of course, I hope everyone would have done the same thing," he said, "but this proves that there is no such thing as Jewish or Muslim or whatever. We all pray to the same God. In a situation like that, you don't think is he Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim? He's just a human being who worked hard for his money."

Hossam Abdalla, who moved to the United States from Egypt in the late 1990s, said the greatest joy he got from the experience, aside from witnessing Bellisha's obvious relief, was hearing the pride and happiness in his father's voice when he called him back home to tell him what had happened. Mr Bellisha has promised the driver a substantial reward and on top of that, Abdalla will be getting the Montrealer's business whenever he's in New York from now on. "Actually," said Mr Bellisha, "he has now

become my personal cab driver in New York. I know I'm in good hands when I drive with him."

## Suspicious 'Taxi' Driver' Delays El-Al Flight From London

As a good follow-up to the first story, a recent El Al flight from London to Tel Aviv was delayed after the captain refused to enter a 'taxi' whose driver appeared suspicious to him. The captain and crew members were being picked up from their hotel to go to the airport, however, the captain was suspicious of the taxi driver whom he described as looking of Mid-eastern origin and refused to enter the vehicle. Another cab was dispatched, but the captain now feared that driver to also be a security threat. The delays resulted in the flight being cancelled until the following day and passengers being placed in local hotels.

Global News has been unable to find out the name of the 'taxi' company – the official reason being that it would breach security. However, we – and no doubt many Taxi Globe readers – smell a rat in the use of the word 'taxi' and would recommend that El-Al consider using a licensed radio taxi circuit, then these problems would not occur...

## Moscow Taxi Driver Foils Bomb Plot

A Moscow taxi driver has averted a possible major city terror bomb attack. Sergei Avetisyan picked up two men, but an argument broke out which ended with the taxi driver pulling out a gas pistol. The two men, whom Avetisyan identified as being of Chechen or Ingush origin from the North Caucasus, then fled leaving a bag on the back seat. When Avetisyan searched the bag at home later, he found a one-pound block of TNT and a detonator inside! "I used to be in the Russian army," Sergei told Global News via the internet, "and I recognised the contents immediately. Believe me, I didn't sleep too well that night as I realised how close I had come to blowing myself up!"

## South African Taxi Filled With Children Burnt Out After Collision

Fourteen schoolchildren and the driver burned to death after a head on collision between a South African 'people carrier' taxi and a car in a suburb of Johannesburg. Charred human remains and the mangled taxi bore testimony to the gruesome accident. The car driver was also killed and his 4 passengers severely injured.

A spokesperson from Johannesburg's emergency services confirmed to Taxi Globe that a BMW Sedan had gone out of control and ended up on the wrong side of the road. It then collided head-on with the taxi causing it to catch fire with the result that the 14 children and driver were burned to death. Sifting through the charred remains the following morning, mortuary employee Mohau Mokwena carefully picked up burnt human bones and put them into a plastic bag. He described the accident as one of the most horrific he had seen.

"In my two years I have seen many accidents and dead bodies, but I've never seen anything like this before. It was shocking to see so many children involved."

# Taxi Air Conditioning

All makes Serviced and Repaired

Mobile Service - We come to you

**Tel: 020 8715 0079**

Covering London & The Home Counties

