

GLOBAL NEWS



PREGNANT WOMAN IN CABBIE HEART ATTACK HORROR!

When Michelle Chinnery felt her baby coming in the early hours, she decided that the best way to get through the streets of Sydney, Australia, without getting lost or waking anyone up, was to grab a cab. That decision could have cost Ms Chinnery the lives of both herself and her unborn baby. It was just before 6am and the driver was finding very little in the way of traffic. Suddenly, right in front of the cab, the driver saw a post van that he couldn't avoid hitting at speed. It was also at that point that police believe the taxi driver suffered a heart attack and the cab ploughed into the post van, before hurtling on at high speed into a wall at such force that both front wheels became detached from the rest of the cab.



Michelle was sitting in the front seat watching in sheer terror as emergency workers ripped away the pieces of twisted metal that were surrounding her. The critically-injured driver was besides her screaming out in pain. Eventually they were both released, with doctors unsure whether the driver suffered a heart attack or possible stroke. He was said to be critical but stable. Michelle was treated for cuts and severe bruising, but more importantly, she gave birth to a healthy baby. "It was awful," Michelle said afterwards. "I just hope the driver will be ok, but thankfully, my baby was unaffected."

PHILIPPINE CABBIE MUGS HIMSELF!

A cab driver in Cebu City in Central Philippines recently faked his own mugging and somehow tied himself up because he could no longer pay the taxi rent to its owner. 28-year-old Quisteris Lagabaton was found by passers-by with his hands tied behind his back and his feet bound with a bandanna. He claimed that he spent nearly six hours tied inside the cab after two men armed with knives mugged him and took his day's takings and the car stereo. His alibi, however, failed to convince the police who wondered why it took the taxi driver almost six hours to free himself from a thin bandana and a lightly knotted towel. After several hours of questioning, the driver admitted that he had spent all his money, sold the stereo and then tied himself up!

The taxi owner later said that she was willing to forgive Lagabaton if he paid her back in full. The cab driver has promised to do so if he can sell his three sheep – a favourite cab driver's standby in the Philippines!

WMD IN A RUSSIAN TAXI?

When police caught up with Russian Taxi driver Tedo Makeria, he was headed toward Tbilisi's main rail station with a lethal cargo hidden in boxes lined with lead so thick that his taxi sagged from the weight! A suspicious policeman, who halted the cab, had barely opened the boot when he noticed the boxes and their distinctive labels warning: 'Danger: Radiation!' More police arrived within minutes – one with a Geiger counter. As Makeria smoked nervously in the back seat, the officers switched the instrument on and watched in amazement as the needle leap off the screen. "At first we were just shocked," one officer at the scene recalled later, "then we all started backing away slowly."

Inside the taxi driver's boxes were two capsules of highly radioactive metals - strontium and caesium. These were of a type that terrorism experts say can be used in a dirty bomb - a device that spews radiation but does not trigger a nuclear explosion. A third container held a vial of brown liquid that police identified as the substance used in mustard gas, one of the earliest chemical weapons. Only later did police learn Makeria's role in the affair. He was a courier for criminals trading in components and materials for weapons of mass destruction.

The boxes were scheduled to be delivered by Makeria by train from Tbilisi to Adzharia. From there, police believe they were to be transported by other couriers across the

border into Turkey or Iran for delivery to an expectant customer. The cab driver told police that he knew nothing about the origins or the destination of the deadly cargo and did not realise that the contents were radioactive, despite warning labels written in English and Russian. Makeria is said by police to be just one of many traffickers in radiological materials over the past three years in what some weapons experts describe as a disturbing new trend. His fate is currently unknown; however what seems certain is that whatever that fate may be, it is unlikely to involve driving a taxi again...

THE KIND JAPANESE TAXI ROBBER!

Several Japanese taxi drivers have recently been robbed and then locked into the boot of their cabs after being handcuffed. Police told Global News that the same man was probably responsible for all the cases due to his apparent "kindness" in phoning either the driver's family or employers after abandoning them!

The latest incident occurred when a male passenger hailed a taxi in Tokyo's Kabukicho entertainment district and asked the driver to take him to Niiza – a 90-minute trip. Once there, the man pulled out a knife and demanded the driver give him money. After stealing the driver's takings, he handcuffed the 51-year-old cabbie – known to have a heart problem - and forced him into the boot of the cab. He abandoned the taxi several miles away and called the driver's family using his pre-programmed mobile phone and explained where he had left him.

"He is obviously a caring man deep down," said a police spokesman. When we replied that in our view this man was a no good robber who just didn't want to take the risk of killing someone, the phone line went dead. So I guess we'll never know!

YOU CAN'T BEAT THE KNOWLEDGE!



The small sat nav screen may be a common sight in minicabs, but taxi drivers know the KoL wins against the technology. There are some instances when a sat nav is useful, a long run out of town for example. However, common sense is also required, the sat nav needs to be used as an aid. The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) say business drivers using satellite navigation should keep a map for backup. Many people in rural areas will have seen or heard of lorry drivers getting stuck in narrow lanes after blindly following their satnav's cheerful instructions. If the UK were to introduce 'road trains' (articulated 60 tonne mega-liners stretching up to 82ft), as has been discussed recently, these incidents could be much more serious says the IAM.

A recent survey (motoring.co.uk) said that 20% of women and 30% of men have blindly followed a satnav into the middle of a field. Network Rail has experienced damage to railway bridges and level crossing collisions as a result of drivers' failure to use their initiative. Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner, said: "Satnavs can be a real aid to road safety, providing the driver already has an idea of the route. Your satnav aids your own navigational abilities. It should not replace them. Have a map as a fall back and remember satnavs are no more infallible than the person who uses them, so do have some idea of your route before you set out. Drivers using satnavs for the first time should be prepared to familiarise themselves with it before setting off on a journey." Mr Rodger added. Although there is currently no legislation for the correct use of satellite navigation equipment, the police have a number of offences they can apply if they believe the driver to have been 'driving without due care' or 'failing to have proper control'. These could result in endorsements of between three and nine penalty points on your licence.

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