

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

Thank you TLC: For creating more public disrespect and misinformation about our industry.

The NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission has once again created a false atmosphere of public distrust and disrespect for our industry. The Taxi and Limousine Commission has announced that it and the NYPD will be embarking on an undercover program to crackdown on bad cabbie behavior. Cabbies are supposed to let passengers pay with credit cards but the TLC says they hear otherwise. The program is named "Operation Secret Rider" (legality questionable) and TLC Commissioner Matthew Daus says the program" is to help drivers get back to basics and remind drivers the passenger is always right." It may also be to remind drivers that they are a cash cow for the city. Offending cabbies will be fined (\$150 for rudeness, cell phone chatting \$200) and those who repeatedly violate

the Taxi Passenger's Bill of Rights - plus not allowing credit card payment - could lose their licenses.

For some reason (probably to feed their political image) the TLC has widely publicized that cabs are taking credit cards. The notices and advertising seem out of proportion to the need for the public to know about the credit card issue. Not only that, but one gets the impression that all the cabs are now equipped with credit card meters. In fact there are at a minimum, between 2000 and 3000 cabs that do not have the system to take credit cards. This is through no fault of the cabbies who have yet to install the system. These are the people who signed up with Taxi Technology. The company is bankrupt and the contract issue is in court. The TLC seems impotent in this case and cannot make a decision as to how these 3000 cabs can get the system. The way the TLC determined that Taxi Technology was a solvent company and was able to fulfill their contract is a whole discussion in itself.

In none of the advertising and notices to the public was it mentioned that a good percentage of the cabs do not have credit card capability. The TLC played on the fact that they thought that many cabbies were illegally refusing to take credit cards. Once again the politicians of the TLC in their self serving way accused the industry wrongly. For a very few who might practice this deceit they have publicly condemned an industry. The public should have been informed honestly about the credit card issue, that the practice of refusal is very limited and that there are a significant amount of cabs without the system – through no fault of there own.

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Also there have been many instances in cabs without the system, that passengers do not believe that the driver cannot take credit cards. Passengers have become angry and abusive to these drivers, even threatening the driver with TLC complaints. There have been instances where upon finding out that the cab does not take credit cards that the passenger left

without paying. Where is the TLC to explain to the public that some cabs do not have the system? Where is the TLC to explain the drivers side of the story? The answer to these questions is that it is not good politically for the TLC to do this.

It is the job of the TLC to regulate the industry for all peoples good, both the public and those who make their living within it. When will they stop being one-sided and do their job fairly and equitably for all?

**Matthew Daus
New York City Taxi and
Limousine Commission
40 Rector St
New York, NY 10006**

March 3, 2008

Mr. Daus:

In February of 2007, while at home one evening I received a phone call from Mr. Thanh Bui, hack # 425613. Mr. Bui drives the taxi I own, taxi medallion # 7L98. Mr., Bui has been under my supervision since 1995.Mr.

Bui, a taxi driver for many years is originally from Viet Nam. He trusts me to help him anytime there is a situation where he is not sure how to proceed. Such was the reason for this telephone call.

He told me that a woman had left a package in his taxi that contained many envelopes with cash. Most of the cash was hundred dollar bills. By his estimates there was somewhere between \$10,000 and \$20,000. He asked me what he should do to see that it is returned to its rightful owner.

After questioning him, I determined that the best course of action was to go to a business that we determined the woman most likely worked at. I instructed him to make sure before he turned it over that they could identify its contents.

The business was a beauty salon, Spa Belles, 1409 2nd Avenue New York, NY, (212) 772-1451. It turned out that the package was a cash payroll for the employees of the business. Mr. Bui was rewarded with a couple of

hundred dollars for his good deed.

At the time I reported this incident to Allan Fromberg. Allan tried to determine the validity of this story by seeing if it was called into the TLC. It turned out it wasn't. I gave Allan the information on the business it was returned to. However, this information was not followed up on. It's now been more than a year since this happened.

If there was ever a deed worth recognition, it is this one. Just ask yourself how many drivers would have acted this way? How many drivers would have sat on the money and hoped it was undetected? If ever a driver did the right thing, it is Mr. Bui. This is an example that all should be aware of.

I'm very disappointed that Mr. Bui and this deed will not be part of this year's recognition ceremony. I am asking that despite the late date this deed be considered. I don't think it's too late.

I look forward to seeing you at this years ceremony honoring drivers who have

**done other good deeds during
2007.**

**Sincerely,
Abe Mittleman**

**I am happy to report that Mr.
Daus considered this request
favorably. Thanh Bui will be
amongst the honored at this
years Driver Recognition
Ceremonies on March 27. I
will be there to report the
event for next month's Mini
Press.**