

Cab Gab
by Abe Mittleman

Taxi drivers in New York City have been crying, begging and pleading with the TLC for some time to help eradicate to infestation of livery and black cars who blatantly steal our fares on the streets of New York City. Additionally we have made the same complaints concerning hotel doormen who take payoffs not only from these livery cars but some medallion taxi drivers who are also guilty of this offence. Up till now the response from the TLC has been that they lack the enforcement personal to enforce the rules against these violators.

In last month's Mini Press I wrote the following:

Taxi drivers have been crying to the TLC for the longest time that doormen and Livery taxis have been illegally conspiring with each other to cheat them out of the good fares that originate at the hotels. The TLC does not deny that this illegal practice takes place. But they are excusing themselves from taking any

punitive action by saying: "There Are Not Enough Enforcement Personnel."

I'm sick of hearing this meaningless excuse. What good is a license if there are no teeth to enforce the privileges of that license? With "Congestion Pricing" dead, now is the perfect time for the Mayor and his administration to prove that they can still reduce traffic with the laws that are already on the books.

Now I really don't want to take credit for what is now being reported, however I think I can say that others in the industry along with writers like myself who have kept the subject on the front burner perhaps will now see some results of their efforts.

On May 9th the following was reported in the New York Post:

The city is launching a major offensive against limos and livery cabs that illegally pick up fares.

The Taxi and Limousine Commission is marshaling its forces for the pending crackdown on drivers who

illegally stop when hailed - in addition to cabbies who pay kickbacks to hotel doormen to steer tourists into their cars, Commissioner Matthew Daus said.

"We're going to be devoting all of our resources for a period of time to do nothing but this," he said. "So we can clear out the central business district of people who shouldn't be there and who pose a threat to safety and are poaching business from people who legally and lawfully have the right to do it."

Only yellow cabs have the right to stop for passengers when hailed, but with businesses cutting costs by using fewer "black cars" that serve the corporate clientele, drivers are hunting for customers on the street.

I am applauding Mr. Daus and the TLC for finally taking this action. But action is louder than words. I look forward to this action actually taking place. This is what we feel they should be doing and we are certainly glad to see that it is finally being addressed.