

FREE MAGAZINE APRIL - MAY 2017

TACSAÍ

IRELAND'S ONLY FREE INDEPENDENT TACSAÍ MAGAZINE FOR DRIVERS & INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

SHOULD DRIVERS HAVE THEIR OWN APP? SEE INSIDE PAGE 5

TAXI SPY
ON-THE-SPOT PRIZES FOR DRIVERS FOUND WITH TACSAÍ MAGAZINE IN THEIR CAR

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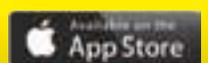
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EDITORIAL

It's not so Uber cool to be Uber right now. The controversial app giant has shipped on board more controversies in the last month than Russia's favourite American, Donald Trump, and that's saying something.

The Californian company – as of the time of going to print – are just about hanging on to their main man Travis Kalanick, that after he was caught on video verbally abusing one of his own drivers... talk about Horrible Bosses eh? But Travis survived the dreaded vote of confidence from the board and remains in place, but for how long remains to be seen. Sexual abuse allegations, along with some pretty serious illegal activity has weighed down the company's sagging reputation and how they finish this fiscal year will be very interesting.

All change too at Hailo or Mytaxi, or whatever they want. New name, a whole bucket load of new complaints from customers over their service and yet still no return to the 2 euro pick-up charge. We hear from one Hailo driver who tells all.

In the capital city, things are looking a tad messy. In fact to quote one person it "looks like a war zone". And why? Our old friend, the Luas works. Not content with tearing up every second street and

causing traffic chaos north and south of the Liffey, the turn at Eden Quay is now gone. Local businesses are now joining in with drivers in calling foul on the Council. To add to that, many zones in Dublin now have a new 30 kilometres per hour speed limit.

If you plan on crossing Dublin anytime soon, bring a packed lunch, a survival kit and a good book; because you're going to be a while.

Insurance companies finally got something of a fright last month when Eoghan Murphy TD announced his new transparency plan in which companies will have to explain why their premiums are the price they are. That should be interesting...

Rickshaws are starting to feel the squeeze too. Tony Roe and Tommy Barton, representing both their organisations, have made the case against the uninsured pedallers to members of Dáil Eireann. Something tells me that the rickshaws will pedal their last fare soon too, as just before we went to print, a story broke – many of them have been found to be dealing Class A drugs.

We have all that, and lots more in this bumper edition of *Tacsaí Magazine*. Safe travels.

Stephen Young
Editor

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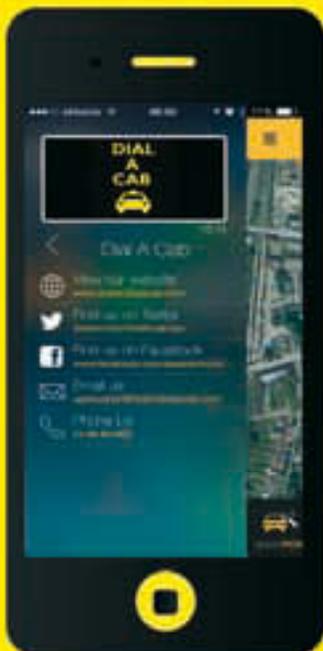


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A NEW APP-OPPORTUNITY FOR IRISH DRIVERS

John Boyle discusses his driver-friendly idea with *Tacsaí Magazine*.

Is there room in the market for another new taxi app?

If the new app was to be controlled by the taxi drivers themselves... then the answer may very well be a resounding yes!

Tacsaí Magazine recently spoke to John Boyle, who has a very bright idea – an app, run by the people who earn their livelihoods from it – the drivers.

Aha! I hear you say. Indeed. It struck us a very interesting proposition too. So, we had some questions. Luckily, John was willing to answer them for us, keen too to hear from drivers and get their thoughts.

What are you proposing, John?

I met a group of taxi drivers, communicating together on a Viber group. During this time I was looking at how drivers from all around the world were working well together as a group. At the time I was also studying mobile app development – one night I suggested to the group that we should consider setting up our own app. The drivers were very interested.

So, what would it take to get such an app off the ground?

The key ingredient is simple; the drivers, do they want to be part of it? Because if the will is there it will happen. From my studies I realised that designing and coding this app could take years to develop, but since then I have located a company who specialise in taxi software, who could supply a taxi booking app straight away.

What is the cost for the driver?

They could go for a percentage-based system which is available elsewhere. But we could provide a small price per job, which would be 50 cent per booking. It would work on a top-up system, so when your balance runs low you top up by 20 euro – which would buy the next 40 jobs. This is my suggestion. That would mean that some drivers operate on 20 euro a week as some drivers may only do 40 jobs a week.

Who would own the company?

Basically there wouldn't be any owner. Every Irish PSV is entitled to their share. It's a Co-op. Every PSV driver is welcome and unrestricted to use the app. We would not be selling out to any investors. The app will be run on a non-profit, cooperative basis. So if the company was generating too much income at 50 cent per job, we would reduce it to 40 cent per job.

How much would it cost to start?

This is a viable project on the basis of every driver joining contributes an upfront fee of 50 euro. That would allow us to self-finance our own launch.

How can drivers get in touch?

Some drivers have heard about this and requested me as a friend on Facebook which I don't mind.

Or drivers can get our updates by text if they send a text to us on 086 011 4599.

So what's next?

I want to see how many drivers also think this is a good idea. If drivers think it is, they will ask their taxi driver friends to join the text group.

If there are enough drivers, I will bring the App to Dublin first and then later the remainder of Ireland.



INSURERS TO FEEL FORCE OF THE LAW

TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE ANNOUNCED BY EOGHAN MURPHY

Insurers will soon be required to explain to drivers why their car insurance premiums have increased.

The recommendation is one of many made in a report published this afternoon by a special government working group set up to examine the high cost of car insurance premiums.

The report from the Cost of Insurance Working Group covered several key areas, such as improving data availability reducing the costs in the claims process, with a view to bringing down high car premium costs for consumers.

The report states the Department of Finance will engage with the insurance industry to establish a common protocol to communicate to customers the reasons for the large increases.

The report states the new protocols must be agreed by the end of the summer.

In order to ensure insurance companies comply with the new system, legislation is needed to underpin the new

rules. The department states new laws will be in place by the end of 2017.

While insurance companies will be mandated to explain why they are increasing their customers' premiums, Minister of State for financial services Eoghan Murphy explained that the government can't interfere in the premiums set by insurers under EU law, stating the premium price must be based on risk.

"The new measures being introduced will mean "insurance companies must explain to the driver why their premium might have gone up – even in the situation where they might not have any additional penalty points or they haven't had a claim made against them – to explain exactly why they got that increase.

"We hope the protections will help them better understand the increase, and give them more time to shop around in terms of getting a better price," said Murphy.

Last year, it was widely reported that some motorists were seeing their car insurance quotes increase from

anything between 50% – 300% in some cases.

Attention to the issue resulted in the establishment of the working group, which met 12 times over the course of last year, in which it embarked on a consultation process with numerous stakeholders.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform also published a report on the rising cost of car insurance.

Today's publication makes over 30 recommendations in total, one of which is that a standard protocol should be put in place by insurance companies "to ensure greater consistency of treatment for returning emigrants".

The report also commits to addressing the increase in uninsured drivers on the roads. Murphy told TheJournal.ie that the rise in uninsured drivers on the road is linked to the rise in premiums.

It was reported last month the number of uninsured cars on Irish roads has nearly doubled to over 150,000 in the space of five years.

A new uninsured drivers database is to be established which will allow gardai check insurance compliance by using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR).

The ANPR system had to be disabled in 2014 due to the "unreliability of insurance data", finds the report. Over 100, garda cars are equipped with ANPR technology.

The report states the insurance industry indicated to the minister in November that it will be in a position to roll out the new database in respect to all privately owned vehicles by the third quarter of this year.

The working group also recommends the establishment of a personal injuries commission to offer guidance on compensation claims.

Mr Justice Nicholas Kearns has been appointed as Chairperson of the new commission.

A new national claims database is also to be established to address the lack of transparency in the claims area.

While Murphy admitted "there is no silver bullet to reduce the cost of insurance, insofar as no one recommendation will solve the problem on its own", he said he believed the action plan would "deliver fairer premiums for consumers".

Fianna Fáil Spokesperson on Transport Robert Troy said people right across the country have been grappling with rising motor insurance costs in recent years and the government have been slow to move on the issue.

"The cost of car insurance has risen by a minimum of 51% since January 2011 and the situation is even worse for those looking to insure vehicles associated with their business. These increases are unsustainable. Exorbitant insurance costs are putting enormous pressure on household budgets and are costing jobs," explained Troy.

He said he is "deeply concerned" with the timeline being reported regarding the implementation of the committee's proposals.

Meanwhile, a representative body for taxis and hackneys is hoping to entice a new insurer to enter the market amid a massive spike in the cost of insuring their vehicles.

The cost of taxi insurance has spiralled by up to 300pc in the past year in some cases, according to the country's largest representative group for taxi and hackney drivers, the National Private Hire and Taxi Association (NPHTA).

NPHTA General secretary Christy Humphreys said his organisation is in discussions with a Lloyds of London



TD Eoghan Murphy

syndicate in an attempt to secure a new insurer for the market and lower the costs for drivers.

Price hikes have been particularly steep for rented taxis, the NPHTA said. Last year, the average price of insurance for a driver renting a taxi ranged from €1,100 to €1,400, a spokesperson said, adding that this year it cost in the region of €3,000 to €4,000.

Drivers of privately owned taxis, meanwhile, have seen insurance costs rise by between 80pc and 110pc, in the association's experience.

There has also been a surge in the number of taxi and hackney drivers who have been refused insurance by three separate insurers, forcing them to appeal to industry body Insurance Ireland.

Providers of taxi insurance in Ireland include Axa, Allianz and Liberty.

In light of rising insurance costs, the NPHTA will also seek an increase in taxi fares, which are regulated, when the system is reviewed later this year. "Fares will have to go up to reflect the rise in costs," said Humphreys. "Though I can't see a situation where the full impact is passed on to consumers, it just wouldn't be fair - it's too much."

The rise in the cost of taxi insurance is putting drivers out of business, he added.

It is "virtually impossible" for new drivers with little experience to get taxi insurance, he said, citing a quote of €23,000 recently given to a driver seeking taxi insurance for the first time.

"It has a knock-on effect on the entire industry. Drivers can't upgrade their cars and are forced to work much longer hours, meaning the likelihood of accidents is higher - it's a vicious circle."

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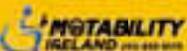
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TAXI

*RANGE OF ISSUES
DISCUSSED IN DÁIL
ÉIREANN MEETING*

Tacsai Magazine recently spoke to National Transport Assembly Committee Chairman Tony Roe, who has met with Fine Gael TD, Colm Brophy to put to him a range of issues affecting taxi drivers at the minute.

Tony has been tirelessly working on behalf of drivers on issues such as insurance, rickshaws and the new traffic system which is coming into place in Dublin city centre soon. So we had a chat with him to hear the details of his meeting at Dáil Éireann.

He said: "We had a meeting there recently with a Fine Gael TD, Colm Brophy. We had a lot of people on to us about what was happening in the industry and we made a note of the drivers' concerns and we had a meeting on March 2nd in Dáil Éireann.

"We had a lot of issues on the agenda. He was actually the one who contacted us and suggested that we have a meeting, which surprised us. We highlighted everything. We brought along a copy of the *Tacsai Magazine* and showed him two editions – from which he could see a whole range of issues.

"The issues that we covered were vital – we brought up the rickshaw concern. We asked him to adopt a similar approach to the one they had done in Galway where they banned rickshaws in 2013. We highlighted several drivers who were after getting their cars, damaged, ruined, mirrors broken etc by these operators. We highlighted the alleged drug activity too and we asked that they would just be banned in a five-mile radius from the city centre of Dublin.

"We brought the issue of insurance; we said we had done our own survey in various countries and the discrepancy that is there now is blindingly obvious. We asked that the government introduce a standard taxi insurance premium that will work for drivers across the board. Whether it happens or not, I don't know, but we wanted to put it on the table and make sure our voice was heard.

"He said there should be an average policy, like London, where cabbies pay no more than £1,000. We said we wanted to stop greedy insurance companies and brokers hitting hard-pressed taxi drivers any more than they already have. We highlighted that some drivers that have a 60% no claim bonus have had over 100% of an increase in their premiums, which is astronomical.

"Then we had a good chat about illegal operators in the taxi industry. We've seen that current license-issuing scam happening at the test centres, which we think is disgraceful. We also highlighted that I brought this about three or four years ago. We're four years down the road now on this, it's been well documented; the Herald, the *Indo* and yourselves have all covered this. So want him to act, we don't want him to just pay lip service to it, we need to have action on these issues. We need to take back these illegal and fraudulent licenses that are out there.

"We also spoke the current taxi fare, which has been reduced. The abolishment of the third rate – which is unique, as almost everywhere else in Europe has it – was wrong, and we want it re-instated. We don't know why it



was dropped in the first place. It could affect standards. The National Transport Authority are always quick to talk about standards and quality so this will affect those things.

"Also the proposal for the new traffic flow system that was banning taxis; we asked him to get on to this and get it back to the Council that we want taxis to be the exception. We want taxis to be allowed use the area that's currently being proposed to be banned in the city centre.

"This new traffic system will just push us into congested areas, and so, as operators within the public transport system, we've asked taxis to be allowed. Shopkeepers, in large numbers, have been on to us, and they feel that their businesses will be affected. A lot of their business comes from customers being dropped off via taxi and are then taken home by taxi. So we said if they're banned in the Grafton Street area, where there are a lot of shoppers, would be crazy and would seep down into the government's revenue in the long run as the shopkeepers feel that their revenue will drop.

"We had an in-depth talk about that safety of taxis. Regarding the recent story of three people arrested outside the test centre in Greenhills; we want the test handed back to the garda carriage office. The garda carriage office have done a great job in the past and have refused to give licenses to certain people in the past. We've pointed out that there has been 600 new Gardaí taken on, so they have a lot more than have had. They would be well able to handle the bit of extra work, and we've pointed out that this move would be beneficial to everybody – the drivers, the customers, the reputation of the industry as a whole.

"You hear the complaints; taxi drivers don't even know where they're going... how can they know where they're going if they haven't been given a proper test! We feel this would address some fears over public safety, particularly at night, to have this addressed".



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stripped down this vehicle too. The point was proven, all the carbon which would have build up in this vehicle throughout its years of operation was gone. Regrettably the running costs of operating a vehicle full time on the chemical solution with the molecular injector as part of the vehicle made the project commercially non viable.

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THE NET CLOSES ON RICKSHAW

**POLITICIANS, DRIVERS
AND GARDAÍ ALL
NOW HAVE THE PESKY
PEDALLERS IN THEIR
SIGHTS**

There have been some big developments in regards to the rickshaws operating in Dublin. Taxi organisations and drivers themselves have told us for the last few years how these operators have been flouting the law.

Now it seems, the noose is tightening.

Firstly, the Dublin taxi Association has been very active over recent weeks in regards of banning rickshaws.

We spoke to Tommy Barton of the DTA.

He said: “We have met and wrote to numerous politicians in regards of The Plague that will be set upon us in the coming months now that the spring and summer months are here.

And of course the tourism industry will see a lot more visitors coming to our Fair City and will more than likely step into a rickshaw as part of their visit, not knowing, totally unaware of course that they are not insured in one of these dangerous death traps called rickshaws, and if they were involved in an accident they have nobody to pursue on legal grounds.

“This issue that has been addressed from the very start by the Dublin Taxi Association to all relevant authorities concerned. And it has so far not been addressed in a proper firm solution.

“Shane Ross is the Minister for Tourism and Transport, and what an embarrassment it would be for the authorities of this country if, heaven forbid, tourists are killed or seriously injured in one of these death traps...

“There have been suggestions to legislate for these plagues of mayhem and madness by the National Transport Authority and Minister Ross, but again of course they cannot decide and will drag their heels to legislate for rickshaws.

“I would ask members of other taxi organisations to put pressure on their representatives and ask them what is their position on rickshaws because so far in the Tacsáí Magazine we are the only organisation totally committed and totally active to pursue a position of a total ban on rickshaws.

“I would like to add; the DTA don't have or own offices we don't do tax returns. That is not the DTA agenda. Please support our campaign of banning rickshaws.”

Some politicians are wholly in support of the ban on rickshaws too.

Fine Gael TD, Noel Rock, told Tacsáí: “I believe that the rickshaw problem in Dublin has reached crisis point. Coming from the Ireland-Wales match in the Aviva on a Friday in March, I was nearly clipped by two of them. Someone else ahead of me wasn't so lucky. These vehicles move with impunity, have no insurance, no road tax, drive hazardously and are more of a threat to road safety than anybody else on it.”

Rock added: “The “industry” if you can call it that, has become more

formalized now too. It is high time Dublin City implemented an all out ban on them.”

And in breaking news on rickshaws – just before we went to print – this shocking story emerged via Independent.ie

A number of rickshaw drivers operating in Dublin City Centre are selling class A drugs while they work.

An Independent reporter approached rickshaw drivers working in the capital and each of them confirmed they had drugs for sale.

These recordings reveal how the drivers are selling weed, cocaine and pills while working on our capital's streets.

When asked to show the pills, one of the drivers lifted up the seat of his rickshaw to reveal where he was keeping his supply.

Another stated that they weren't “selling tonight” as Gardaí were in the area and it was “too risky”.

Each driver had the same set price, indicating that they may be working under the same supplier.

A source told Independent.ie that some drivers keep locks on their seats to conceal their stash of drugs in case of a spot check by Gardaí or Revenue.

It is believed that up to 20 rickshaw garages are currently in operation across Dublin, with two garages located on Montague Lane near the popular nightlife area of Harcourt Street.

The main business for rickshaw drivers comes from picking up punters





TOMMY BARTON, NOEL ROCK TD AND JOHN TEELING.

as they leave pubs and clubs, with the majority of drivers being of Brazilian nationality.

However, the drugs business is said to be becoming increasingly popular with rickshaw drivers as a way to make extra money on the side.

Some rickshaw drivers use the work as a means of learning English and maintain that they can't get any other work in Dublin.

One driver, when asked why rickshaws had such a bad reputation, he responded: "Because of drugs, but most of us are good guys".

Recently, the Department of Transport and National Transport Authority (NTA) insisted they have "no powers" to regulate the uninsured rickshaws in Dublin city.

Rickshaws have been growing in numbers and taxi drivers and councillors have been calling for regulations to be introduced.

Fianna Fail's spokesperson on the National Drugs Strategy Jack Chambers TD, said: "Many people will be shocked to learn this practice is happening in such a public and organised way.

"That rickshaw operators are engaged in drug dealing like this is very concerning, particularly when it is almost entirely young people who use them and normally after they have consumed alcohol, making them more vulnerable.

"This further highlights the need for Minister Shane Ross to finally act to restore some control with regard to rickshaws."

Sinn Féin TD Séan Crowe, who has previously called on the Government to address the problems being caused by rickshaws, says he's not surprised by the revelations.

"I am not really surprised that they may be selling drugs, as they are being sold everywhere. Kids as young as 12 sell them out my way," he told independent.ie.

"I just think it is out of control. I did write to Shane Ross and his reply was that he recognised there was a need for greater regulation, but it was going to be later on in the period of this Government.

"There's definitely a need for this to be prioritised by the Government. We are just abandoning people's safety."

The issue of rickshaw regulation was recently raised in the Dáil and Minister for Transport Shane Ross says he will be able to outline a time frame for the legislation in due course.

"My Department is now engaged with the NTA to clearly frame the policy to guide any detailed legislative drafting, with passenger safety the key focus. I will consider the legislative proposals which emerge when this work has been progressed, following which I should be in a position to outline an indicative legislative timeframe."

A Garda spokesman said: "We would advise anyone who is aware of criminal activity to report it to their local Garda station were the matter will be fully investigated."

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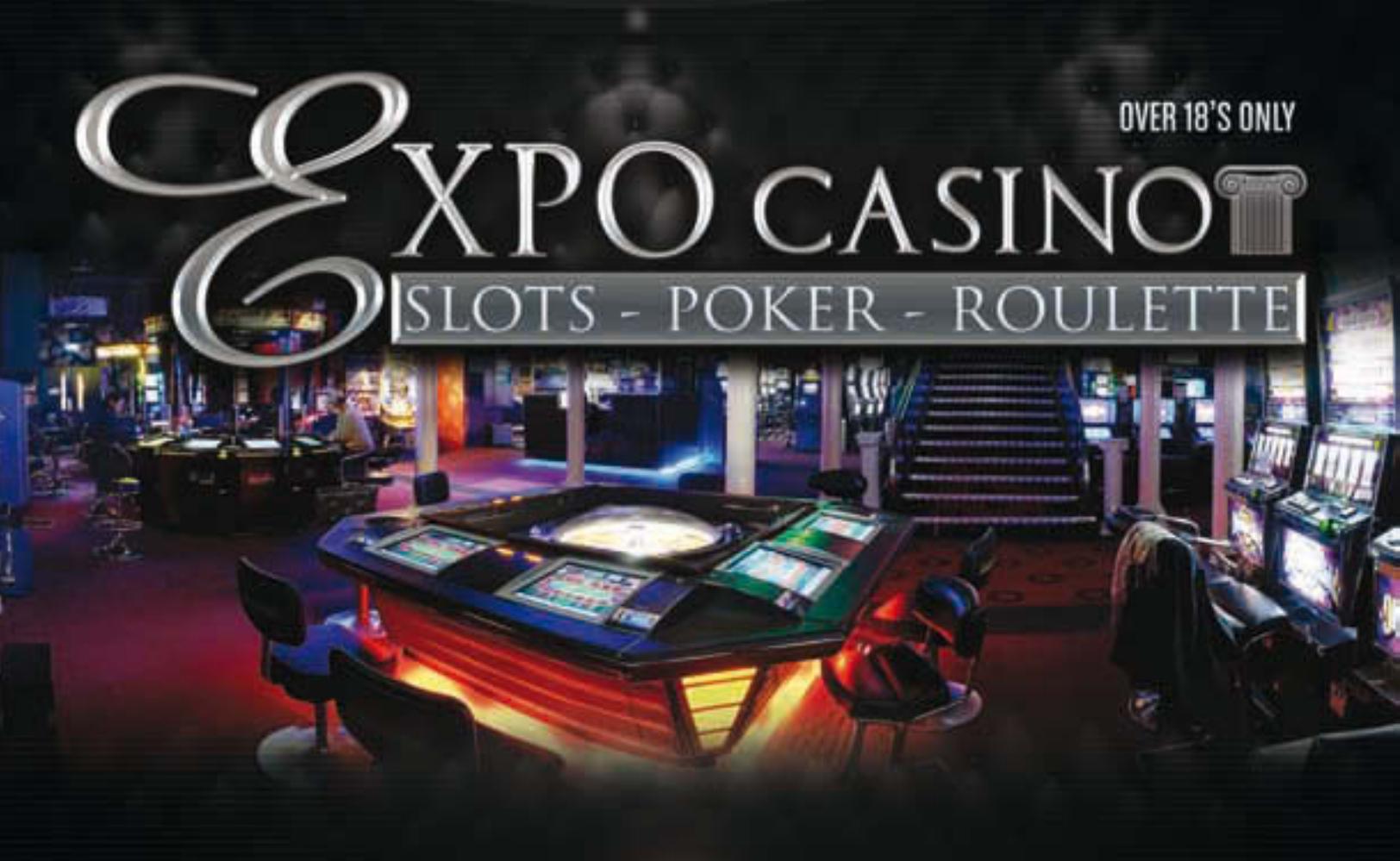
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DRIVER CAUGHT WITHOUT SPSV IN MAYO

CABBIE FINED IN COURT

A former taxi driver who was operating without a Small Public Service Vehicle licence has appeared before Claremorris District Court, sitting in Castlebar.

The court heard that Mr Seamus Barnicle, with an address at 40 Luí na Gréine, Claremorris, had admitted he no longer had the proper licence after compliance officer Patrick J Durcan took his taxi on October 14, 2016.

Maurice Dockrell, prosecuting counsel for the National Transport Authority, told the court that Mr Durcan and another officer had ordered the taxi while at the McWilliam Park Hotel in Claremorris. He told Judge Devins he gave Mr Barnicle's mobile number to the receptionist and when he arrived asked him to take a fare to Balla. There was no disc or proper SPSV licence on display and Mr Barnicle confirmed the fare was €20.

When they arrived in Balla they produced their warrants and he admitted he did not have the proper licence.

"He said he previously had been a registered driver but he had been assaulted in 2013," Mr Dockrell said.

Taking the stand, Mr Durcan said: "On the evening in question I was investigating complaints about unlicensed drivers in the Claremorris area."

He told Judge Mary Devins that he knew Mr Barnicle's mobile number because he had been registered previously.

Defending solicitor, Seamus O'Brien said his client was a 64-year-old separated man with four adult children.

"He was the subject of a significant assault in the course of his work late one night. He instructed me that he had taken the call [made by Mr Durcan] on the night in question because of financial difficulties," Mr O'Brien said.

Judge Devins was told that the cost of a SPSV licence was €250.

She convicted and fined Mr Barnicle €200 and ordered him to pay costs of another €200.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We here at Tacsáí are constantly looking for ways to improve your experience of the magazine. After all, this magazine is for all who work in the industry; drivers, cab companies, companies who supply valuable products and services to the industry, black drivers, white drivers and even people from Cork (ah, we love you really lads).

The industry has come through some tough times in the last few years and we have been here to bring you the news that affects you.

We are dedicated to that. On a weekly basis, I speak to five, six, seven, eight drivers, sometimes a dozen. All with different grievances and problems that are affecting them, and we try to cover all of those issues within the constraints of a small magazine produced solely on advertising revenue.

We have taken on board many suggestions – the gags and quiz pages came at the request of a number of drivers. The world news page too. The Special Children's Day Out is a particular joy to cover for me personally, and it's a positive news story for the industry when too often a very small minority make the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

In recent times we've had the Vehicle Age

Limit, which is really only now hurting drivers. We currently have the widespread panic over insurance premiums and the massive problem with rickshaws. We are always ready to highlight horrific stories of theft and violence against drivers too. The cowards that attack men and women going about their work deserve to be named and shamed and we will continue to do that.

So, what we want now is for more drivers to get in touch. Make your feelings known. This magazine circulates to 16,000 other drivers, and not just drivers... as a story in this month's edition shows; an American tourist contacted us to compliment an Irish driver who had gone above and beyond the call of duty to return some valuable equipment.

There are many issues that are still affecting drivers. If you have something you want to say, it will do more good to say it to 16,000 than the half dozen other drivers at your rank, or a customer in the car.

Get in touch with me, the editor, on 086 1277031, or email stephenyoung399@hotmail.com

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TTNH KEEP THE PRESSURE ON PREMIUM HIKES

EOGHAN MURPHY REPORT FAILS TO TACKLE THE ISSUE

The insurance crisis has continued into 2017 unabated. Government has promised reforms and legislation is coming, though probably nothing that can help drivers in the short term. Eoghan Murphy has recently published a report on transparency, but in the meantime, costs are skyrocketing.

We recently heard from TTnH on the issue of insurance, among other things.

Spokesman, Dave McGuinness said: "Rising insurance costs remain a huge issue for taxi drivers.

"TTnH held the first in a series of protests on October 12th. This action was well supported by drivers. It is our intention to up the ante as we feel the report into the cost on insurance chaired by Eoghan Murphy TD does not go far enough in terms of transparency, and a lowering of Insurance Premiums. We have held talks with Richard Boyd Barrett TD who attended our AGM on February 6th where we put forward a number of proposals to members. We protested at the Dáil on February 16th at the introduction of this report. We would hope this action is widely supported by drivers who are facing huge premium hikes.

"The Taxi Advisory Committee meeting on January 26th saw a wide-ranging agenda including Regulation of Rickshaws, WAV grant 2017, Taxi Fares Survey, SPSV Driver entry requirements which



**Inset: Dave McGuinness
Left: Richard Boyd Barrett**

were discussed in detail.

"On December 12th amendments were offered and passed by Imelda Munster of Sinn Fein and Robert Troy of Fianna Fail, to change The Road Traffic Act and the Taxi Regulation Act to give the NTA the power to regulate Rickshaws. Unfortunately the amendment to the Road Traffic Act used the term non-motorised transport i.e. rickshaws. As most taxi drivers are aware rickshaws have electric motors attached and the amendment needs further amending. We would hope to have progress on this shortly.

"The WAV grant will be available from April 3rd on a first come, first served basis with 750,000 being made available. The original restriction of two grants per person lifted in 2016 has been returned.

"Meanwhile, taxi fares are currently being reviewed by the NTA and we will have the outcome of this survey in late February 2017.

"The NTA are currently collating the data received from the public consultation on SPSV driver entry requirements. Proposals will be brought forward to the next Taxi advisory Meeting.

"With regard to the taxing of taxis online; assurances were given that this process would be introduced in January 2017; however problems have arisen with the Department of Transport. We are hoping this issue will be resolved as soon as possible."

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SAY HAILO TO MYTAXI - NEW NAME, SAME OLD PROBLEMS

WE HEAR FROM A HAILO DRIVER

Hailo's changeover promo may just be to simply inform their existing users that they are now mytaxi. Or, it could be a goodbye to a growing percentage of users - if their Twitter complaints page is anything to go by.

In our last edition we ran a story covering the dramatic changes at the app. Now we hear from Hailo/mytaxi driver, who has some grievances with the company. Most notably the dropping of the 2 euro pick-up charge and the lack of any face to face complaints process.

For the purposes of a certain amount of anonymity, our contributor will only be named as Dave.

Dave told us: "Well it's an ongoing argument really (about the changes at the app) - there's so many people using the app now and we're trying to get the 2 euro pick-up charge back. Now, an email was sent out, and it basically outlined their attitude towards drivers.

"But one major thing it did specify was that it is an 'e-hailing company'".

"They came along in 2012 and it was a brand new thing, no taxi driver had ever heard of an app on a phone for jobs, it was all radio punters before then. And the 2 euros was in then, but they eventually took it off and then it went from 10% to 12% and we're expecting mytaxi now to go from 12% to 15% as soon as they get

their foot properly in the door.

"For us as drivers; if we have a complaint ourselves or an issue to raise with the company we can send an email but you just get an automated reply 'your case is being looked at' blah blah blah 'a customer services officer will be in touch shortly'. Or you could walk into the office you'll see someone in the reception and you'll be told 'ok we'll deal with it', but who deals with it? We don't know who's dealing with things...

"According to Twitter, there are an awful lot of customers complaining about the service. This mytaxi app is a joke to be honest. You're getting jobs 6 or 7 kilometres away in peak traffic... Why they couldn't merge or whatever and leave the app the way it was; none of us drivers will ever know...

"These are problems for company and the customers who use it obviously, but what us drivers want to see more than anything is the 2 euro pick-up back. Because why travel for a job when you're not getting paid for it."

It seems like there are a lot of problems at Hailo/mytaxi at the minute and they don't seem to be getting solved. If the company intends to stay in the market and stay competitive, they could do worse than to treat their drivers and their customers a little better - just a little free advice. We used to charge 2 euro for those nuggets.

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WORLD NEWS

TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

AUSTRALIA

Victorian taxi drivers are accusing the state government of wiping out their financial futures with an 'unfair' licence buyback scheme. The Victorian government wants to deregulate the taxi industry by abolishing taxi licences and introducing a single registration for taxis, hire cars and ride-share services like Uber.

It proposes to compensate taxi licence holders by paying \$100,000 for their first licence and \$50,000 for up to three others. However, some licences cost up to \$500,000 and many holders fear the buy back scheme will send them broke.

Victorian Taxi and Hire Car Families spokeswoman Sandy Spanos says drivers were staging protests in Melbourne on Monday to highlight the plight of some 3500 Victorian families who will suffer under the deal.

"We need you to come to the party and pay us out. We are mums and dads, grandmas and grandpas and we don't want to be on welfare," she said. Up to 200 taxis blocked Melbourne's Bolte Bridge as part of the protest, before flooding the streets near state parliament demanding a full licence compensation. Taxi driver George Goutzioulis says he'll fight for proper compensation of his family's three licences, with the current deal set to refund just 20 per cent of their investment.

"We bought under the impression it was industry regulated but now that's been ripped away from us all," he says

CANADA

After two legal challenges failed to stop a pilot project allowing Uber to operate legally, taxi drivers took to the streets in protest and demanded to meet with Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard.

Taxi industry representatives say Uber, a mobile application that bills itself as a ride-sharing service, has caused them to lose revenue because it charges rates that generally undercut taxi fares. Its existence has also caused taxi drivers' investments in pricey taxi licences to plummet. Uber drivers don't purchase taxi licences, and won't be required to do so under the terms of the new pilot project.

Couillard said he is open to meeting taxi industry representatives,

but there is no question of cancelling the pilot project.

About 1,500 taxis wound their way through the streets of Montreal, paralyzing traffic on their way downtown.

"I have so many expenses; I'm always in debt," Abeille Jeanguillemard said as he drove along the Metropolitan Expressway. "But the person driving for Uber can use any car, and he doesn't have to pay anything upfront. It's not fair."

Jeanguillemard detailed his expenses, the largest sums being car payments: \$515 weekly loan payments on his taxi licence, and about \$20,000 annually in fuel and maintenance costs.

"At the end of the year, I have about \$15,000. I can't live on this," he said.

UK

Black cab drivers brought traffic to a standstill in Westminster with a protest outside Downing Street - saying they are battling to defend their livelihoods.

Thousands of cab drivers swamped Whitehall as a cacophony of car horns filled the air to signal the start of a 90-minute protest against transport bosses and minicab app Uber.

The demonstration was called by the United Cabbies Group (UCG), which accuses the government of "supporting" Uber and failing to properly regulate the service, allowing the global tech company a "competitive advantage".

Cab drivers say the success of Uber has hit them hard, with takings down by up to 30 per cent - but they remained defiant today saying they will keep protesting and stopping traffic until "something is done".

The UCG said in a statement: "We are talking about the livelihoods of tens of thousands of drivers and their families.

"Londoners who value their traditional taxi service should rally round it and send a signal to the candidates in the London mayoral election that they will support those of them who give a clear pledge to put an end to the unfair practices of Uber and protect the iconic heritage of London that London taxis represent."

Taxi drivers say TfL is giving out far too many minicab licences



for there to be enough work to go around, with hundreds being approved each week.

They also complain that London's transport bosses are not doing enough to stop some minicab drivers from touting for trade on the streets, which they are not licensed to do.

Carlos Oliveira, 58, a taxi driver for nearly 30 years, said: "I'm here to try to embarrass the Mayor into enforcing laws which already exist.

"Imagine you run a butcher's shop and every week 6,000 new butcher's shops open on your street and the next street.

"Since Uber came in it's killing us."

BRISBANE

Police believe a severed gas line started a fire that has gutted a maxi taxi in Brisbane's inner west.

The taxi, which was empty and parked in a suburban street in Taringa, exploded in a ball of flames.

The blaze was so intense it spread to a second car parked near the taxi.

Taxi driver Jaggi Suman said he was in his apartment when someone knocked on the door to tell him his cab was on fire.

"[It was] really huge — it just happened in just seconds, it didn't take even minutes, it was just burnt out really badly," he said.

Neighbour Sarah Barron said she heard a loud bang and headed onto the street, where she captured the blaze on camera.

"It was quite scary," she said.

"We just saw a large ball of smoke and some large explosions and came out and saw that a taxi was on fire.

"It would have been above the power lines and it would have been lasting for 15 minutes."

US

A homicide investigation is underway after an altercation between a taxi driver and a passenger turned deadly at a Hollywood gas station. Officers from the Los Angeles Police Department Hollywood Division responded to a call of an altercation at a gas station near Beachwood Drive and Franklin Avenue at about 3:15 a.m.

Authorities found the taxi driver, later identified as Asfawosen Alemseged, unconscious in the parking lot of a 76 gas station. Alemseged was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he later died, police said.

Investigators said it appeared Alemseged was first attacked over a fare dispute while he was inside the cab.

"This is probably a fare dispute that escalated into a robbery, into a physical assault, to the victim's death," Lt. John Radtke of the LAPD said.

Detectives said the altercation then continued outside the vehicle.

The suspect was believed to be a passenger who was being dropped off near the gas station.

Investigators were checking surveillance video for more information on the crime.

Scent dogs were also aiding police in the suspect search.

"What they attempt to do is get a scent from the suspect and then specifically follow that scent wherever it leads them," said Radtke. "It did lead them eastbound on Franklin and into the local community."

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DRIVERS FEELING RANK-LED

LUAS AND COLLEGE GREEN PROPOSALS ADD TO CLOSURE CHAOS

The Luas has really thrown the proverbial spanner in the works. Not to mention, of course, the proposed College Green shut-out.

Adding to the traffic crisis that is looming over Dublin City, taxi drivers have found their ranks disappearing faster than Usain Bolt.

The Gresham rank, as we covered in the last issue, is gone. An historic rank, replaced by the nearby Prince's Street rank – a three-car rank has not done anything to quieten the growing concerns of the capital's cabbie's.

Damien Kitson spoke to Tacsai about the growing closures and their impact.

"I think it's great to highlight the closing of the Gresham rank, but there is a bigger picture – there are ranks closing all over the city.

"When these new Luas line go up and running; it's going to be very hard to find work anywhere. They're saying then new Luas is going to cross O'Connell Bridge every 30 seconds, and the rumours we're hearing is that you're not going to be able to go straight across from Bachelor's Walk on to Eden Quay.

"Now, I've been checking up on the Dublin City Council website and it's unbelievable what they've done; they have the Heuston Station as four or five ranks, you and I both know that's only one rank. You go over to the Burlington Hotel and they have that as three ranks...

"Where the old rank was there at Stephen's Green has obviously been replaced by the Luas terminus. But that final stop could have been put further back up Harcourt Street, and the taxi rank could have stayed...

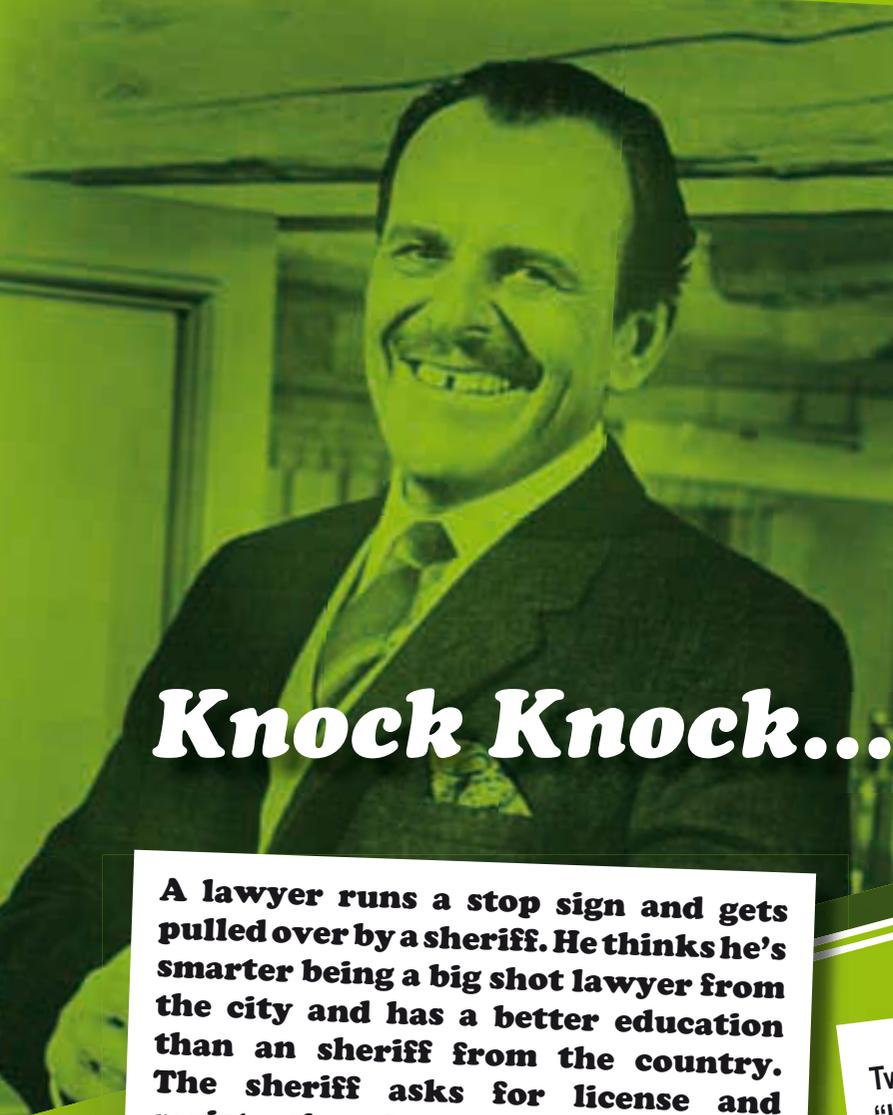
"At the moment, if you're at the rank now where the Topshop is and you want to get on to Baggot Street, you've to come round, down the little side lane on Mercer Street, back all around Stephen's Green – nearly a three-quarters circle of Stephen's Green just to get to Baggot Street.

"Fellas keep saying 'it'll be great, we'll get more money for the fares', but if a customer does that route once, and the cab brings you halfway around town to get there, you're certainly not going to do it again.

"They've taken the Gresham rank, they've taken the Abbey Street rank... everywhere there was high-profile ranks. I don't know if there was an impact study done on the effect this would have on taxi drivers when they took these away.

"And with the College Green proposals; I worry about customers just saying no taxis. They'll walk across town, they'll get the Luas or whatever. I think that's what the authorities want to be honest. But it's making life very tough for the driver.

"I would like to see the Unions tackle this better. It's a huge issue for drivers. There are ranks shutting down all over the city, and something needs to be done".



Knock Knock...

A lawyer is standing in a long line at the box office. Suddenly, he feels a pair of hands kneading his shoulders, back, and neck. The lawyer turns around. "What the hell do you think you're doing?" "I'm a chiropractor, and I'm just keeping in practice while I'm waiting in line." "Well, I'm a lawyer, but you don't see me screwing the guy in front of me, do you?"

A blonde, a redhead, and a brunette were all lost in the desert. They found a lamp and rubbed it. A genie popped out and granted them each one wish. The redhead wished to be back home. Poof! She was back home. The brunette wished to be at home with her family. Poof! She was back home with her family. The blonde said, "Awwww, I wish my friends were here."

A lawyer runs a stop sign and gets pulled over by a sheriff. He thinks he's smarter being a big shot lawyer from the city and has a better education than an sheriff from the country. The sheriff asks for license and registration. The lawyer asks, "What for?" The sheriff responds, "You didn't come to a complete stop at the stop sign." The lawyer says, "I slowed down and no one was coming." "You still didn't come to a complete stop. License and registration please," say the sheriff impatiently. The lawyer says, "If you can show me the legal difference between slow down and stop, I'll give you my license and registration and you can give me the ticket. If not, you let me go and don't give me the ticket." The sheriff says, "That sounds fair, please exit your vehicle." The lawyer steps out and the sheriff takes out his nightstick and starts beating the lawyer with it. The sheriff says, "Do you want me to stop or iust slow down?"

Two factory workers are talking. The woman says, "I can make the boss give me the day off." The man replies, "And how would you do that?" The woman says, "Just wait and see." She then hangs upside down from the ceiling. The boss comes in and says, "What are you doing?" The woman replies, "I'm a light bulb." The boss then says, "You've been working so much that you've gone crazy. I think you need to take the day off." The man starts to follow her and the boss says, "Where are you going?" The man says, "I'm going home, too. I can't work in the dark."

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asks a young engineer fresh out of college, "And what starting salary are you looking for?" The engineer replies, "In the region of 125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package." The interviewer inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?" The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replies, "Yeah. but vou started it."

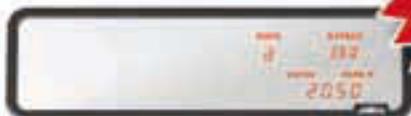
An organisation is like a tree full of monkeys, all on different limbs at different levels. The monkeys on top look down and see a tree full of smiling faces. The monkeys on the bottom look up and see nothing but a*****s.



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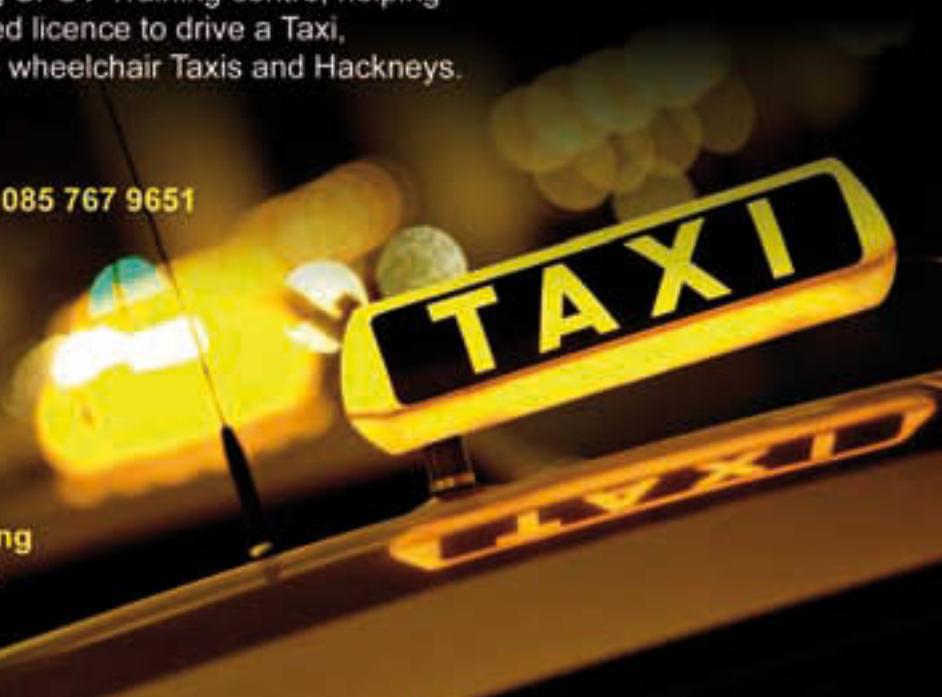
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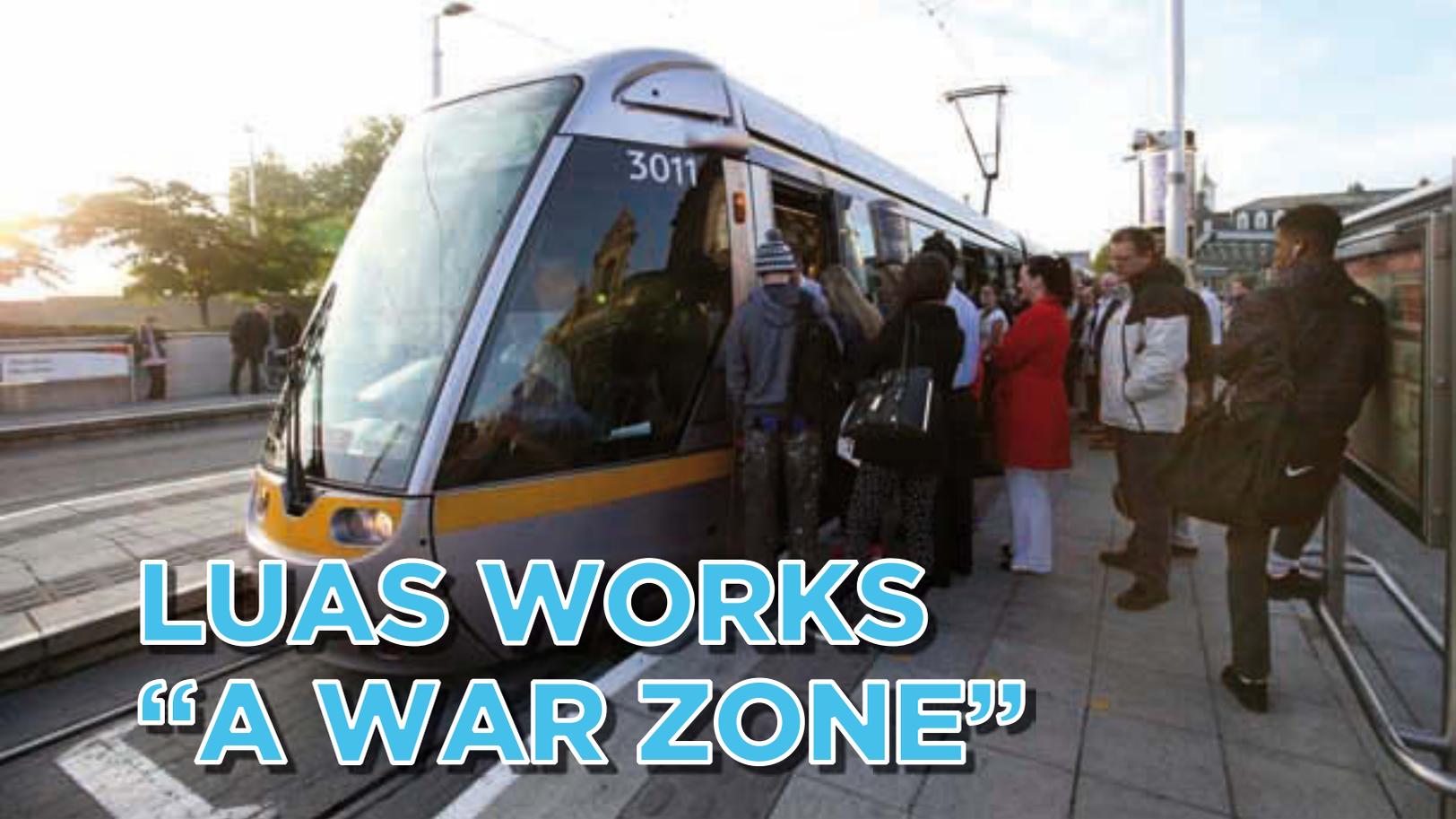
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LUAS WORKS “A WAR ZONE”

EDEN QUAY TURN IS THE TIPPING POINT FOR MANY

Taxi drivers have called the works “something akin to a warzone”. The seemingly endless Luas nightmare is proving an endurance test for drivers in the capital. Now, with the Eden Quay turn gone, the city has united behind cabbies’ long-held concerns over the shambolic plans and the process. The ongoing Luas works have been labelled a “monumental disaster” for many businesses along the new route.

The Luas Cross City project, which will connect the Green and Red lines, will run for 5.6km between St Stephen’s Green and the Iarnród Éireann Broombridge Station on the Maynooth railway line. Yesterday, motorists were banned from turning on to Eden Quay from O’Connell Bridge as part of the ongoing construction works.

“Any kind of works like this are going to cause some kind of traffic disruption - it’s to be expected,” said AA Roadwatch director Arwen Foley.

She said that so far there had been “no major traffic disruption, nothing out of the ordinary”.

“In the long run, we’ll have a better transport infrastructure which will only benefit Irish commuters,” she added.

The permanent change regarding Eden Quay will only allow public transport and cyclists to access the route. Luas Cross City urged all motorists wishing to access Eden Quay to do so using alternative routes.

Many roads outside busy spots such as The Westin hotel have been turned into building sites. This and other negatives including heavy congestion and high city centre parking fees are increasingly pushing shoppers out to big suburban shopping centres, it has been claimed.

Adrian Cummins, chief executive of the Restaurants Association of Ireland, has echoed taxi drivers’ sentiments in insisting that areas such as Dawson Street have become like a “war zone”.

“The Luas works are a monumental disaster for restaurants along the new Luas route being developed,” he said.

“Businesses have been victimised by these construction

works. The lack of progress, consultation and no completion date means our members cannot create a definite plan.

“If you were to write a book on how not to communicate with businesses, this project would be the perfect example.”

Mr Cummins added that a number of restaurants on Dawson Street even had to close due to a lack of footfall because of the Luas works.

“Hopefully, when they’re finished it will attract customers into the city centre, but what about those businesses that have closed their doors because of these works?” he said.

“We firmly believe that these works should continue on a 24-hour schedule to fast-track its completion.”

Retail Ireland director Thomas Burke said that although it has been a difficult couple of years for businesses along the route, the finished project will increase their footfall.

“On the main it is a really positive thing. It has been difficult for businesses to manage logistically, but the cross-city project has been working with us to limit the impact.

“We’re hoping the worst is over and are anticipating that it will be ready before Christmas.”

Grainne Mackin, head of communications for the Luas Cross City project, said she refuted claims that there has been no communication with businesses along the new route.

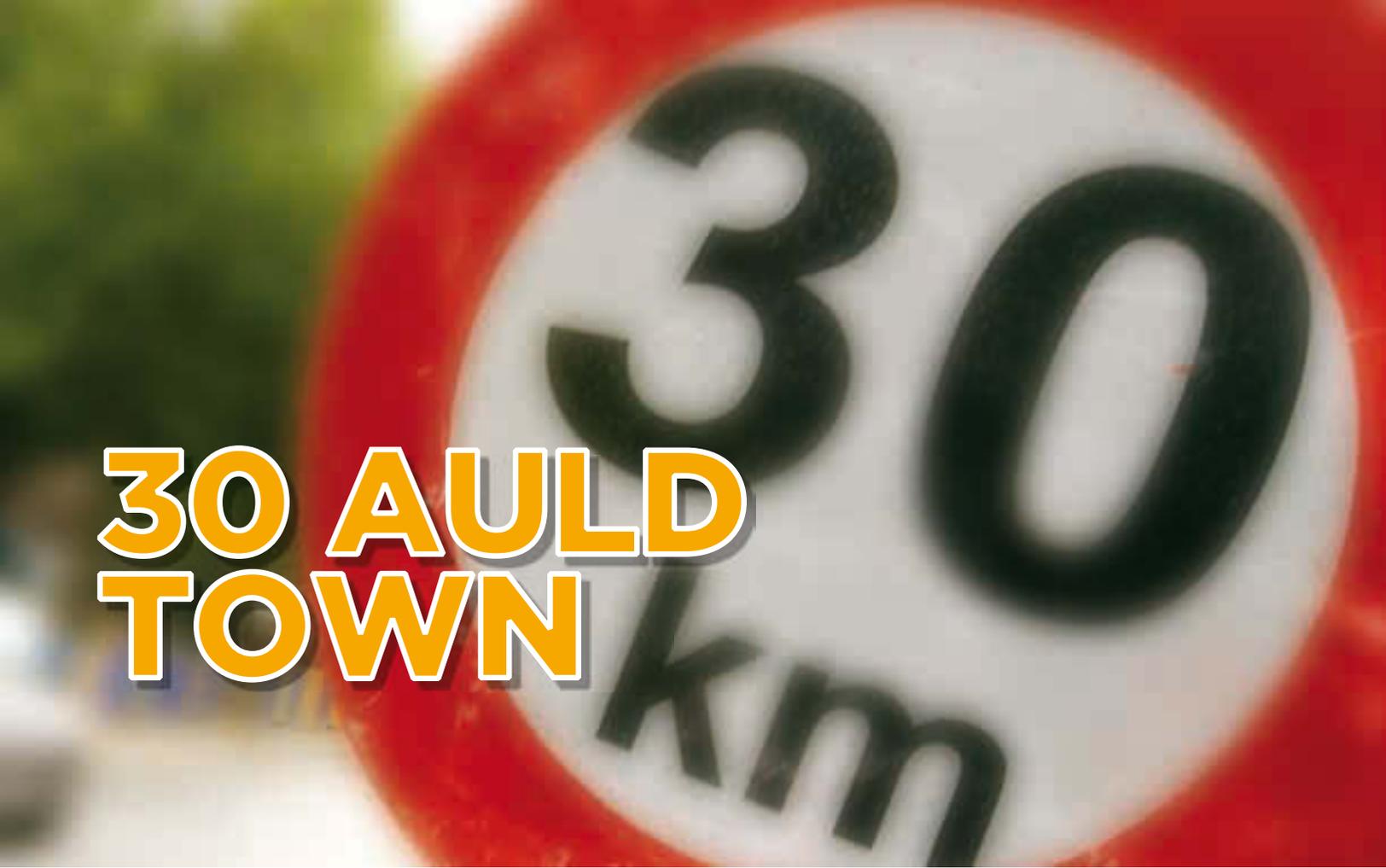
“We have three liaison officers who work in the communications office just off Dawson Street,” she said.

“We have a face-to-face point of contact with all the restaurants and the stakeholders along the new route, so in terms of communicating and engaging we have done a lot.

“We expect the project will be finished and running by the end of the year. In June, we’re also hoping to do a gauge run which will see the first tram going from Stephen’s Green all the way through to the new route.”

Ms Mackin added that having 24/7 works would lead to further disputes among businesses.

“There are a lot of works at night and also during the weekend. However, restaurants that open at 6pm don’t want people working late and making a lot of noise,” she said.



30 AULD TOWN

DRIVERS DISPUTE NEW SPEED LIMITS

There has been a mixed reaction following the introduction of 30km/h speed limits in Dublin's inner city in early April, with taxi drivers in particular disputing the effectiveness of the move.

The lower speed zones came into force from 12am on April 1st and have been implemented in residential areas and near schools within the canal cordon.

The initiative is being driven by Dublin City Council in an effort to improve safety for pedestrians, and it is due to be rolled out to suburbs including Sandymount, Glasnevin, Crumlin and Cabra over the coming months.

Taxi driver representative groups have been involved in discussions over the implementation of the measure, however Christy Humphries says it will slow traffic with no concomitant benefits for public safety.

He added that speed ramps and reduced speed limits at restricted times around school opening and closing hours are just as effective, and said taxi drivers must now run the gauntlet of picking up penalty points for what he sees as minor indiscretions under the new rules.

While largely supportive of the 30km/hr limits Marie Metcalfe of the north east inner city community policing forum believes they are largely inconsequential in urban areas.

"I've never heard anyone complaining about the speed limit. It hasn't been a major issue for the inner city. With the city, it's such an active place, there's so many cars and so many pedestrians that people are very aware. Even our children in the inner city are very streetwise," she said.

She added that the new limits will be beneficial in estates where children play on the roads, particularly in suburban areas which are not as busy as the inner city.

AA Ireland director of consumer affairs Conor Faughnan also gave a tentative welcome to the low-speed zones, but is critical of what he sees as a failure to introduce complementary devices such as rumble strips and chicanes.

"When you're installing a 30km/hr speed limit you've got to do more than just change the number on the pole, you've got to properly design the area," he said.

He continued: "There are some locations where really all that's been achieved has been to put up a counter-intuitive speed limit number on the pole. Our concern about that is whatever your intention when you do that, the practical effect is you wind up with this creeping culture of speed limits being ignored.

"Really what you do is you create a culture whereby people don't truly believe in the speed limit."

He also called for consistency in the enforcement of speed zones in urban areas across local authority boundaries.

Cycling lobbyists have hailed the 30k/hr limits as a good start to making the roads safer for vulnerable users.

The five cyclists killed just three months into 2017 is already half the total for last year, and Dublin Cycling Campaign spokesman Domhnall Egan says more needs to be done to arrest the trend.

"An initiative like 30km/hr is a good starting point, but that's only the start of a greater, broader initiative," he said.

"The only way cyclists will be safe is if motorists slow down on the road. Also, they need to give way to cyclists and be aware of cyclists.

"Even cycling in from where I am in Finglas there are linings in the road, there's challenges at traffic lights, uneven surfaces, particular junctions in the city that are very busy," added Mr Egan, who said cyclists need to make "more noise" to protect their interests."

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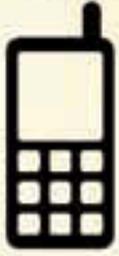
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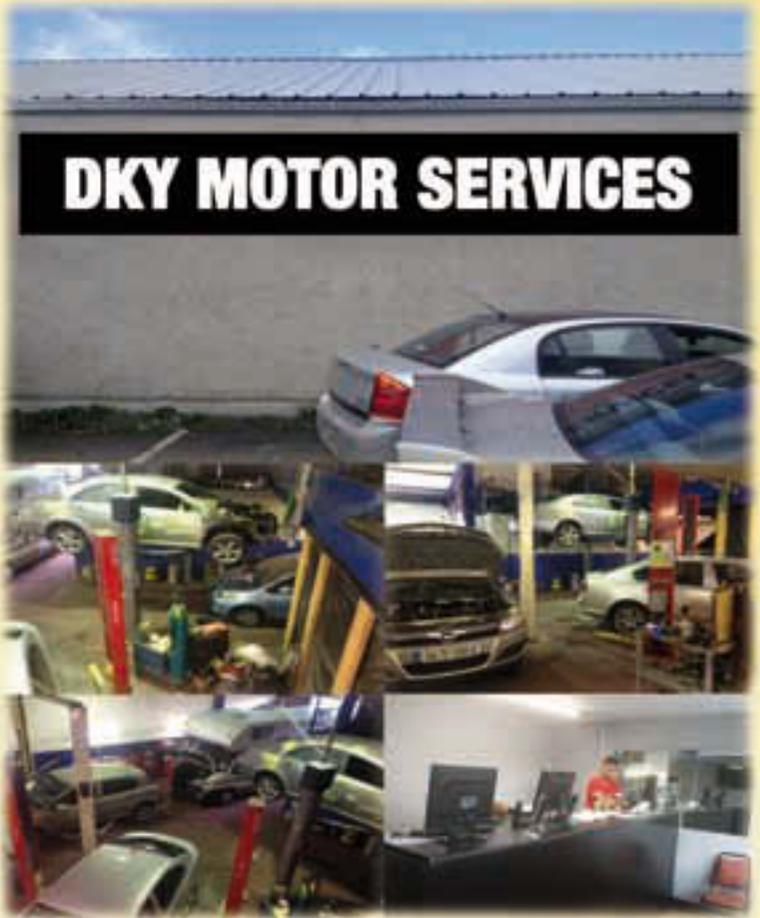
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Tacsaí spoke to Philip Devereux at the Hybrid Motor Centre, based in Rush, North Dublin.

"It benefits both sides" Devereux says. "The driver gets reduced costs and everybody's happy with the environmental side of it.

"We're bringing in really low-mileage cars from Japan at the right price, if you compare them to the UK market for Prius' and other hybrid cars - they're far superior when it comes to that, and ultimately that's what's driving the taxi men to buy them.

"With regard to the Prius, it's what's known as a homogenised car, so it's only built in factories in Japan no matter where you buy them. So part for part they're identical and insurance companies have reflected that in their low prices.

"We have a big stream of them coming in, making us the largest Toyota Prius dealers in the second-hand market."

So is there a market for the Prius in the taxi industry?

"There is absolutely. We've found that word of mouth from other drivers is the biggest factor. We find that taxi drivers are trading in their dirty, old diesels for Prius'. The diesel is good on fuel, of course, but it comes at a cost as well because you have certain auxiliaries of a car that run with a diesel engine that are troublesome like the EGR valves, the Diesel Particulate Filters and Turbos. You don't have any of that with a Prius. You can cut that right out of your cost base when you're running a taxi business. That's the beauty of it."

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Philip added: "We're keen to do business with the taxi trade. If drivers have trade-ins we're more than happy to take them in. We also have a comprehensive warranty for the drivers".

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ARE THE WHEELS FINALLY COMING OFF AT UBER?



A VERY BAD MONTH HAS TURNED A SPOTLIGHT ON THE SHAMBOLIC APP COMPANY

The meltdown at Uber is so severe and wide-ranging it's hard to know where to begin; such is the malfunction at the American app.

Let's try and round it up for starters.

At the time of going to print Travis Kalanick is barely hanging on to his job as CEO. Uber President Jeff Jones has quit the company citing differences over "beliefs and approach to leadership". The New York Times has run an explosive and potentially far-reaching editorial exposing the company's secret program to foil law enforcement and a top member of staff has had to quit due to sexual harassment allegations at a previous job. Not related; former Uber employee Susan Fowler has alleged sexism and harassment at the company in a recent blog post. The damning expose has near-ruined the company's image in the US, especially amongst women.

Almost like the dreaded Vote of Confidence in football; Arianna Huffington – Uber board member and media tycoon – has just said the Kalanick should "absolutely not step down... and that people should not be judged by their worst moments".

The worst moment she is speaking of is the caught-on-camera rant that Kalanick had at one of his own drivers. That's right.

All of the above has now led to Uber conducting its own internal investigation into its workplace culture.

Let's start with Amit Singhal.

Singhal has left his job at Uber as its SVP of engineering because he did not disclose to the car-hailing company that he left Google a year earlier after top executives there informed him of an allegation of sexual harassment from an employee that an internal investigation had found "credible."

Singhal was asked to resign by Uber CEO Travis Kalanick.

Uber execs found out about the situation after Recode informed them of the chain of events between Singhal and the search giant this week.

Sources at Uber said that the company did extensive background checks of Singhal and that it did not uncover any hint of the circumstances of his departure from Google. Singhal disputed the allegation to Google execs at the time.

In a statement, Singhal denied the allegation again, although he did acknowledge the dispute with Google.

He said: "Harassment is unacceptable in any setting. I certainly want everyone to know that I do not condone and have not committed such behavior," he wrote to me in an email. "In my 20-year career, I've never been accused of anything like this before and the decision to leave Google was my own."

The embattled ride-hail company then logged on another controversy when Bloomberg published dashcam video of CEO Travis Kalanick arguing with his own Uber driver over the company's treatment of drivers, prompting a mea culpa from him a few days later.

The video, reportedly taken on February 5th, shows Kalanick riding in the back seat, wedged between two female friends,

shimmying his shoulders to the strains of Maroon 5.

When the ride ended, driver Fawzi Kamel took the opportunity to share a common driver complaint: "You're raising the standards, and you're dropping the prices."

The pair discussed the state of the ride-hail market for a few moments before Kamel drove his point home. "People are not trusting you any more," he said. "I lost \$97,000 because of you. I'm bankrupt because of you ... You keep changing every day."

Kalanick denied that the prices for Uber's high-end service, Uber Black, have fallen that much, saying, "Bullshit."

Then he got personal with Kamel.

"Some people don't like to take responsibility for their own shit," he said. "They blame everything in their life on somebody else. Good luck!" Then he slammed the door.

According to Bloomberg News, Kamel took the opportunity to rate his rider with just a single star.

That Tuesday night, Kalanick apologised for his behavior in the video in an email to Uber staff, which the company also published on its blog.

"To say that I am ashamed is an extreme understatement," he wrote. "My job as your leader is to lead ... and that starts with behaving in a way that makes us all proud. That is not what I did, and it cannot be explained away."

"It's clear this video is a reflection of me – and the criticism we've received is a stark reminder that I must fundamentally change as a leader and grow up," he added. "This is the first time I've been willing to admit that I need leadership help and I intend to get it."

Kalanick's charged claims about taking responsibility are revealed at a particularly difficult time for the company, whose business model relies on classifying drivers as independent contractors rather than direct employees. That designation, which has long been challenged by labor advocates and drivers, allows the \$70bn company to avoid paying minimum wage, overtime, workers compensation and benefits.

In January, the company paid \$20m to settle allegations by the Federal Trade Commission that it recruited drivers with false promises about their prospective earnings.

Drivers for Uber Black, such as Kamel, face particular struggles because they are required to drive recent models of select premium vehicles. Drivers earn a higher rate, but they are increasingly competing with Uber's cheaper UberX rides.

Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, called Kalanick's interaction with Kamel "heartless" and "appalling".

"Fawzi Kamel's plight is far from unique," she said. "We've talked to so many drivers who have been left in insurmountable debt after purchasing or leasing vehicles based on promised income from Uber then unable to make the payments as Uber has slashed fares, increased its commission, and flooded the streets with too many vehicles."

Then, the story broke that could do some genuine damage to the company – legally.

The New York Times reported:

For years, Uber's app has had a secret feature designed to thwart local government efforts to stop drivers from driving without a taxi license, known as "Greyballing," blocks suspected city officials from calling drivers. When blacklisted officials logged in to Uber, they would be shown a fake map populated with cars that didn't actually exist. If officials hailed these imaginary cars, the ride would mysteriously get cancelled before they got picked up.

The Greyball program was part of a cat-and-mouse game Uber has played with officials in various cities for years. Driving an unlicensed taxicab is illegal in many cities, but Uber insisted that it was simply a market maker — connecting drivers with riders — and not subject to city taxi regulations. So officials' only option in many cases was to enforce the law against drivers: fining them or even impounding their cars if drivers were caught picking up passengers without a license.

To prevent officials from using its own software to target drivers,



Uber essentially created a special fake version of the Uber app specifically for city officials that didn't actually allow them to get a ride. Without the resources to systematically sweep streets for unlicensed drivers, that often made it impossible for officials to enforce the law.

Uber isn't denying the existence of the program. "This program denies ride requests to users who are violating our terms of service — whether that's people aiming to physically harm drivers, competitors looking to disrupt our operations, or opponents who collude with officials on secret 'stings' meant to entrap drivers," Uber said in a statement.

Reportedly, Uber managers in a particular city would identify the locations of city government offices and monitor users who used the apps in those areas. They would check users' names against known city officials and blacklist credit cards that were "tied directly to an institution like a police credit union."

And then there's this:

Enforcement officials involved in large-scale sting operations to catch Uber drivers also sometimes bought dozens of mobile phones to create different accounts. To circumvent that tactic, Uber employees went to that city's local electronics stores to look up device numbers of the cheapest mobile phones on sale, which were often the ones bought by city officials, whose budgets were not sizable.

According to the Times, Uber's "Greyballing" tactics were mostly used outside the United States, where anti-Uber enforcement efforts tended to be particularly aggressive. But it was also sometimes used in the US, including in Portland, where a 2014 video showed officials trying and failing to hail Uber riders.

Jones's departure is fundamentally a sign that Uber isn't really trying to change its ways. The company gained initial traction in the marketplace thanks to a pirate-ship mentality that viewed willingness to break the rules as a core competitive advantage. Having gained enormous revenue and visibility since it launched in 2010, it would probably have made sense to slow down, mature, and try to transform itself into something more like a boring utility company that maintains good relationships with drivers and regulatory stakeholders.

Uber's view of the marketplace, though, is that the ride-hailing platform is just a stepping stone to a future network of ubiquitous

self-driving cars. That's encouraged the company to plow ahead with the pirate mentality, including perhaps stealing from Google, in an all-out race to win the future of transportation.

It's far from clear that a rule-breaking company with a toxic public image at war with its own workforce can really pull this off without imploding in the process. The taxi market really was (and is) regulated with little concern for public safety or consumer interests. But Uber's sense that the rules don't — or shouldn't — apply to it is leading to an escalating series of problems that could easily destroy the company.

Uber has resisted the notion that its drivers are employees at all, and only under threat of legal action of the basic question of how the workforce related to the company. The settlement, in the end, was a broadly reasonable compromise that allowed Uber to maintain the flexibility it wanted while addressing key driver grievances and even moving toward the creation of a formal group to represent the interests of Uber drivers. But this was dragged out of the company as a concession, not put forward proactively as a workforce model.

The company maintains an aggressive research division based in Pittsburgh that's working on self-driving technology, and at corporate headquarters it's taken for granted that the existing hailing business is just a stool to be kicked aside soon enough in favour of the robotic future.

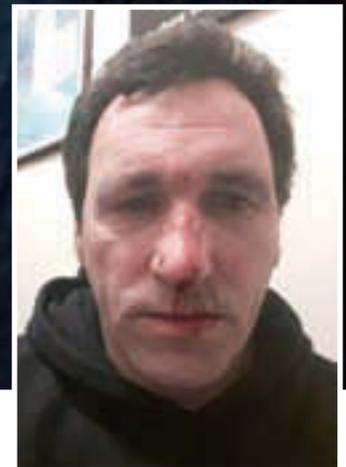
The core of Uber's original case for brushing aside taxi licensing regulations was that this was a fundamentally silly area of government intervention into the economy. All of Uber's drivers had driver's licenses, and their cars were all legal to drive. The basic regulatory issue was whether legal drivers piloting legal cars should be allowed to let someone ride in the back seat in exchange for money.

Self-driving car technology, by contrast, poses obvious public safety hazards. Like any car, if self-driving cars malfunction, people will die.

Uber has given life to the slogan "move fast and break things" in a way that Facebook, which coined it, never did. It was a perfect pitch for an early venture capital fundraising round, but it's a frankly terrible motto for a company that aspires to play a critical infrastructure role in piloting fast-moving metal objects down the street.

GARDA

PADDY'S DAY NIGHTMARE FOR WEXFORD DRIVER



CABBIE'S NOSE BROKEN IN ATTACK

A taxi driver had to spend a night in A&E after suffering a broken nose following a brutal attack in Wexford town on St Patrick's night.

Father-of-two Vincent Grace was hit a number of times on the head after telling a man, who had been drinking, that he couldn't bring him home because he had another job booked.

Mr Grace has been working as a taxi driver in the Wexford area for 12 years and has been out of work for the past week following the attack.

He claimed the man responsible punched him through the window of his bus and started pulling on the door of the vehicle.

The person who attacked him is described as being in his 30s and well-known in the area.

"I was pulled in along the quays of Wexford waiting for a passenger who had asked me to bring him home," Grace said.

"This fella, who I know, started trying to flag me down. I was shaking my head and pulled down the window to tell him I had another booking. He asked me five or six times to bring him home and each time I explained how I couldn't.

"He called his girlfriend across the road and then started trying to get into my bus. Meanwhile, she had flagged down another taxi but he still persisted.

"Next minute, he turned to me and said 'You are nothing but a f**king p**ck' and punched me in the side of the head through the window."

Mr Grace said the man punched him five times in total and broke his nose.

There was blood all over his bus and a fellow taxi driver had to intervene after the man tried to pull open the door to carry on the attack.

After visiting the care doctor on duty in Wexford town, he was sent to A&E and did not get home until nearly 12pm the next day.

"There's not a night that I'm working now that I don't see trouble when I'm out. Everyone uses drink as an excuse but it's not acceptable. I usually only take phone jobs now so I know who I'm picking up.

"I've lost out on a week's wages because of this."

Gardaí in Wexford are investigating the incident.

No arrests have been made.

Meanwhile, a taxi driver accused of biting off part of a passenger's thumb after the passenger made fun of his name has been acquitted by a jury.

Lookman Kareem told the jury he has no idea how the passenger lost part of his thumb and said he was acting in self defense during a struggle with the complainant. He said he was been attacked by a group of passengers and that a passerby dressed as Santa tried to intervene.

It was the State's case that Lookman became very angry when the group he picked up saw his Christian name on his taxi ID and began laughing because 'Look, man' was a catchphrase of one of the women in the group.

Kareem told gardaí that before the incident the group was passing his ID around and taking photos of it. He alleged when he told them they weren't allowed handle his ID, they replied, 'This is our country, we can say what we want, we can do what we want. Go back to your own country if you don't like it.'

Kareem alleged he was then dragged out of the taxi by three of the passengers who punched and kicked him while he was on the ground. He said a male passenger punched him in the head and jaw while some passersby, including a man dressed as Santa Claus, tried to stop it.



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MOTABILITY IRELAND IN FULL SWING AS WAV 17 TAXI GRANT SCHEME IS LAUNCHED.

Multi award winning car adaptations company Motability Ireland are very busy at present converting the popular vehicle models for wheelchair accessible Taxis due mainly to the grant scheme going live on April 3rd. The grant scheme allows €10000 towards the purchase of a new wheelchair accessible Taxi.

The Ashbourne based company converts all vehicles in house and is a one stop shop for all Taxi drivers as the company supplies both the vehicle & carries out the conversion on site.

Speaking to Motability Ireland's general manager Jonathan Moore, he explains what activities are taken place at their NSAI approved workshop facilities

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SPECIAL TAXI RATES



LIFE AFTER THE TAXI...

We speak to Thomas Maher about retirement.

Have you thought about retirement? I'll bet you have. Hey, you're not alone... I dream about it every morning between about the time my son wakes me up with a Fireman Sam truck to the head, until well after breakfast.

When you finally get there, though, how does it feel? Retirement can be a funny old game.

Some people make plans. They book tickets to see countries they've never seen. Some people can't do anything as fanciful due to health or financial restrictions. Some people resolve to finally beat the bookies or improve their golf game.

Tacsaí recently had a call from a recently-retired taxi driver – a former Lynk employee – Thomas Maher. Thomas hung up his Lynk uniform last year and has found that he is missing the day to day hustle and bustle of the taxi industry.

"I retired there just before Christmas and turned 72 in February.

"My working life began an office boy in the CIE at 15 years of age – wearing the same black jacket and trousers and blue shirt as I finished up wearing at Lynk.

"I started out as a driver in 1994. I started off with a company near Cherrytree called Fab Cabs. I started off as a hackney driver and then I was up in Tallaght one day and this fella was opening up Village Cabs and he asked me would I go with him so I said I'd give it a go. So I became a

day driver and did days ever since then.

"After that another company grew in Tallaght – Telecabs. They're now known as Lynk cabs. I was with them a long time. I enjoyed working with them because I live near Tallaght Hospital and a lot of the work – only about 5 minutes drive away – and I used to do a lot of account work with Tallaght Hospital. They got to know me very well in there because I always gave the nurses a dig out. When I had passengers going into the hospital I always went in with them if they were by themselves.

"I was a hackney driver to begin with. But in time I became a taxi driver. I'll never forget doing the PSV test, your man came up to me at the end and said 'you got 98% in your test' and I was always very proud of that. I enjoyed working with Lynk, and all the other people I worked for. I do miss it sometime you know? They say that you do, but I find my days are hard to fill".

Despite that, Thomas has gone back and done Adult Education, he has completed his Leaving Cert, which he had never done at school. He has also contributed to a book about the history of Tallaght, in conjunction with a course he completed at Maynooth College. Our interview was conducted outside of Thomas' strict pool-playing hours of 10am to 4pm. He was gracious enough to lend us his time, and we here at *Tacsaí* Magazine wish him all the very best for his future endeavours.



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Knock Knock



A guy spots a sign outside a house that reads "Talking Dog for Sale." Intrigued, he walks in. "So what have you done with your life?" he asks the dog. "I've led a very full life," says the dog. "I lived in the Alps rescuing avalanche victims. Then I served in Iraq. And now I spend my days reading to the residents of a retirement home." The guy is flabbergasted. He asks the dog's owner, "Why on earth would you want to get rid of an incredible dog like that?" The owner says, "Because he's a liar! He never did any of that!"

During an impassioned sermon about death and final judgement, the pastor said forcefully, "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement." Glancing down at the front pew, he noticed a man with a big smile on his face. The minister repeated his point louder. "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!" The man nodded and smiled even more. This really got the preacher wound up. He pounded the pulpit emphatically when he came to the ultimatum: "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!!!" Though everyone else in the congregation was looking sombre, the man in front continued to smile. Finally the preacher stepped off the platform, stood in front of the man and shouted, "I said each member of this church is going to die!" The man grinned from ear to ear. After the service was over, the preacher made a beeline for the man. "I don't get it," the preacher said in frustration. "Whenever I said, 'Each member of this church is going to die,' your smile got bigger. Why?" "I'm not a member of this church," the man replied

Fred: "Why do elephants wear red nail polish?"
Bob: "I don't know, why?"
Fred: "To hide in cherry trees."
Bob: "But I've never seen an elephant in a cherry tree."
Fred: "See. it works."

A man walks into a bar and sits down. He asks the bartender, "Can I have a cigarette?" The bartender replies, "Sure, the cigarette machine is over there." So he walks over to the machine and as he is about to order a cigarette, the machine suddenly says, "Oi, you bloody idiot." The man says with surprise in his voice, "That's not very nice." He returns to his bar stool without a cigarette and asks the bartender for some peanuts. The bartender passes the man a bowl of peanuts and the man hears one of the peanuts speak, "Ooh, I like your hair." The man says to the bartender, "Hey, what's going on here? Your cigarette machine is insulting me and this peanut is coming on to me. Why's this?" The bartender replies, "Oh, that's because the machine is out of order and the peanuts are complementary."

Teacher: "Anyone who thinks he's stupid may stand up!"
Nobody stands up
Teacher: "I'm sure there are some stupid students over here!"
Little Johnny stands up
Teacher: "Ohh, Johnny you think you're stupid?"
Little Johnny: "No... I just feel bad that you're standing alone..."

A completely inebriated man was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter. A Garda pulled up and said, "I've got to take you in bud. You're obviously drunk." The wasted man asked, "Officer, are ya absolutely sure I'm drunk?" "Yeah buddy, I'm sure," said the Garda, "Let's go." Breathing a sigh of relief, the wino said, "Thank goodness. I thought I was crippled."

A disciple went to his master and said, "I have served you faithfully for ten years. Now I have a wish: give me something to eat which will never end." His master said, "Here, have some chewing gum."

General Knowledge Questions

1. In which year was the first US Masters golf championship held?
2. Which NHL player was nicknamed "The Great One"?
3. Which Formula One race is held at the Red Bull Ring?
4. Which country hosted the first Rugby League World Cup?
5. Which Italian football team shares its ground with Lazio?
6. Which West Indian bowler took 14 wickets in a test match against England in 1976?
7. Which two sports are combined in a biathlon?
8. Which circuit has hosted the Australian Moto GP since 1997?
9. In which US city are the NFL team The Chargers based?
10. Which South American team won the 2015 World Polo Championship?
11. In which sport is the Swaythling Cup competed for?
12. Who in 1981 became the first Briton to win a World Judo Championship?
13. How many players make up an Aussie Rules football team?
14. Which team won all but one of the NBA championships in the 1960s?

THE TACSAÍ MAGAZINE BUMPER QUIZ

15. In which year did Sebastian Vettel win his first Formula One championship?
16. In which New York borough is the US Open Tennis championship held?
17. In which year did the first non-USA team lift yachting's Americas Cup?
18. In which Australian city would you find the GABBA cricket ground?
19. How many players are there on a hurling team?
20. What trophy is awarded to the winner of golf's USPGA championship?

- ANSWERS**
1. 1934
 2. Wayne Gretzky
 3. Austrian Grand Prix
 4. France
 5. Roma
 6. Michael Holding
 7. Cross-country skiing & shooting
 8. Phillip Island
 9. San Diego
 10. Chile
 11. Table tennis
 12. Neil Adams
 13. 18
 14. Boston Celtics
 15. 2010
 16. Queens
 17. 1983
 18. Brisbane
 19. 15
 20. Wanamaker Trophy

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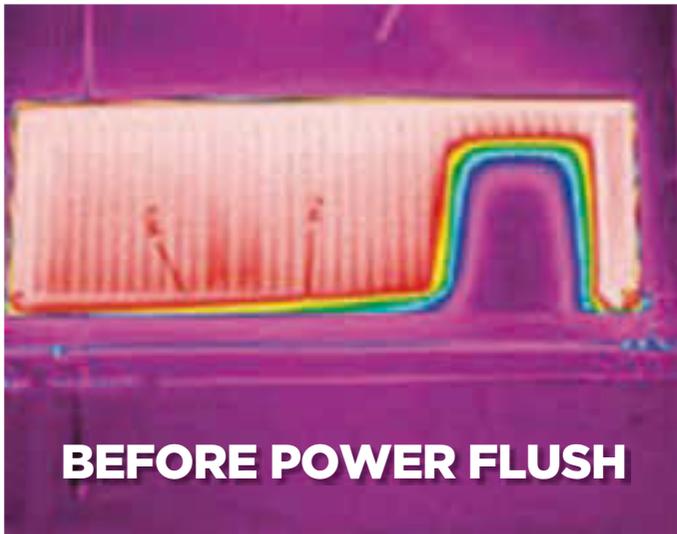
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POWER FLUSHING SAVES MONEY

If your heating system has never been treated or flushed you should consider that your heating system could potentially damage the internal workings on your boiler costing money on repairs or even worse.



This is a badly blocked radiator as you can see from the picture we captured before the power flush took place. Notice the dark blue spot in the centre. This is a build-up of unwanted materials circulating in the heating system over years and results in a build-up of what can best be describes as “black sludge” - this is called Magnetite. Magnetite is formed over years of corrosion to the internal pipe work and fittings of the heating system. The metals corrode and particles form in the water and eventually build up and form “black sludge” in the pipework, radiators and boiler.

This is a perfect example of what can be achieved from a power flush; the blockage has been broken down by the chemicals flushed through the heating system and extracted from the water using magnets. In some cases, badly blocked radiators cannot be fully unblocked. We have come across some radiators that will not fully unblock because the heating system has never been flushed or treated before and the magnetite has set like steel.

If your heating system has never been treated or flushed your heating system could potentially damage the internal workings on your boiler costing money on repairs or even worse. We offer a high-quality power flush of your heating system and boiler that will remove most, if not all of the magnetite from your system. The chemical is then neutralized in the heating system and flushed again. Inhibitor is added to the heating and our very own chemical that works with the inhibitor and reduces the chances of the heating system to produce magnetite in the future.

The average cost of a complete power flush is around €650. We appreciate that this isn't affordable to some homeowners and have been thinking of ways to reduce the cost of this process. We have made a compromise and are now offering an easy payment plan exclusive only to Dublin 15 residents who receive *Little Village* magazine. This plan includes boiler service, magna filter and survey of heating system as standard.

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Donegal Solicitors specialise in personal injury cases.



McGinley & Co. Solicitors is a Donegal-based business that specialises in a broad range of legal services. They have over thirty years' experience in the legal profession fighting for their clients, who come from all over Ireland.

McGinley & Co take great pride in the relationships they establish with clients, listening to your individual story and guiding you through the legal process.

Based in Donegal with offices in Millford and Letterkenny – and with satellite offices all around the country – McGinley & Co. Solicitors are your ideal partner for both personal and business case clients.

Kyran McGinley spoke to Tacsáí Magazine shortly before we went to print and said: “Our specialised expertise lies in Personal Injury cases and Medical Negligence cases. We have a proud history in successfully representing our clients in getting the best possible outcome and making the legal process as easy as we possibly can. We provide the following legal services to both our personal and business clients.

“If you have suffered a personal injury from a road accident in which you were a driver, passenger, cyclist or pedestrian, you may have a claim for compensation. If you have suffered damage to your car from an uninsured driver or been the victim of a hit and run, you may be entitled to reimbursement for your losses or injuries.

“We deliver clear, brief and impartial advice and guidance

for our clients and we guarantee to do everything possible to ensure a positive outcome to your case”.

How long does a typical claim take?

Each and every case is totally different, which is why do not list approximate times on our website. Different cases will require different paperwork and follow a separate procedure. Our team will advise you at consultation what the average time is expected to be. We will also notify you of any hold ups or things that are likely to delay your case.

Will my case end up in court?

Not all cases end up in court, in fact most settle before it comes to that. Sometimes it may be necessary due to the case or third parties involved. You can rest assured that you are in safe hands with McGinley & Co. Solicitors.

What do you charge?

Again, all cases are different and must be treated as such. We can advise this during consultation.

How do I go about making a personal injuries claim?

The first thing to do is to ensure that you have received professional advice from a solicitor. At McGinley & Co. Solicitors we are on hand to ensure that you receive the help you need.

Accidents / Personal Injury?

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FREEPHONE: 1890-908-913

FOR OUR OFFICE CALL:

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- ✓ Road traffic accidents
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