

U-M student rant against Uber driver goes viral



David Jesse, Detroit Free Press 5:51 p.m. EDT March 28, 2016

The profanity-filled rant was recorded by the driver and has more than 300,000 hits on Youtube



(Photo: Eric Risberg, AP)

A [profanity-filled rant \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12VeNY-QoYA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12VeNY-QoYA) by a University of Michigan student against an Uber driver has gone viral, drawing hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube.

But the student, Jake Croman, who is Jewish, claims his rant is only half of the story. He says the driver set it off by making an anti-Semitic remark.

Croman is facing an investigation by U-M and by the fraternity he belongs to.

The video clip, shot by Uber driver Artur Zawada, was posted on March 23.

It shows a group of college-aged students standing outside a car, screaming at the driver.

Then, one of the students really goes off, repeatedly using the F-bomb, along with a slur against gay men, calling him a "minimum wage f---ot."

The clip is 33 seconds long.

Croman is the son of New York City real-estate developer Steven Croman, [Buzzfeed News reported. \(http://www.buzzfeed.com/davidmack/university-of-michigan-uber-video#.twe53923z3\)](http://www.buzzfeed.com/davidmack/university-of-michigan-uber-video#.twe53923z3). He is listed on U-M's directory as an undeclared major student at U-M's College of Literature, Science and the Arts.

"We find the actions depicted in this video to be reprehensible and completely inconsistent with our community's closely held values," U-M spokesman Rick Fitzgerald said. "We expect more from our students. Regardless of the circumstances, no one deserves to be treated that way. This matter has been reported to Ann Arbor Police. We are awaiting the police report as we consider our next steps.

"Our dean of students met with both the Uber driver and the students last week."

Croman is also a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon's U-M chapter.

"Tau Kappa Epsilon has begun our investigation into the video which allegedly contains one of our members," the national organization's spokesman Alex Baker said in a statement emailed to the Free Press. "We are extremely disappointed by the individual's demeaning words. As an organization founded on the personal worth and character of the individual, our members come from a wide range of diverse backgrounds of race, creed, and orientation. At the conclusion of our swift, thorough investigation, we will handle the situation with appropriate action. Depending on the details of the investigation, this could include the expulsion of membership."



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[Why should a Muslim love America?](http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/2016/03/28/american-muslims-donald-trump-ted-cruz-islamophobia/82335634/)

[\(http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/2016/03/28/american-muslims-donald-trump-ted-cruz-islamophobia/82335634/\)](http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/2016/03/28/american-muslims-donald-trump-ted-cruz-islamophobia/82335634/)

According to the New York Daily News, [Steven Croman is under investigation](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/son-reviled-nyc-landlord-filmed-harassing-uber-driver-article-1.2579810) (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/son-reviled-nyc-landlord-filmed-harassing-uber-driver-article-1.2579810>) by New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman for allegedly forcing rent-stabilized tenants out of their homes.

The driver said this isn't the first time he's had a problem with this student.

"This is 4th time that I have been harassed by this rider and his friends," Zawada said in a comment posted under the video. "Nov. Dec. and twice in March. I told him on 3rd occasion that I requested Uber to banned him but he is/was using friends accounts. Told him and his friends that I will not take them and that he/they need to get out of my car..... For that I was falsely accused, called names etc. 4th time... Rider knew from Uber application who is the driver. He had option to cancel to avoid any issues but he/they proceeded to abuse, harrase, belittle and provoke like kindergarten thugs."

In a statement issued through a family spokeswoman, Croman said the driver sparked the rant.

"This video shows one side of an argument I had with an Uber driver two weeks ago after he refused to pick me up on the basis of my religion. What you don't see in the video is that the driver had made a number of offensive anti-Semitic remarks that provoked my response. I am not proud of my reaction to his discrimination and I regret my choice of words. Shortly after the verbal altercation, I filed a complaint with the Ann Arbor police department and they are now dealing with the issue."

This the latest in a [series of incidents](http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/02/21/kalamazoo-shooting-uber-driver-crime/80702074/) ([/story/news/local/michigan/2016/02/21/kalamazoo-shooting-uber-driver-crime/80702074/](http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/02/21/kalamazoo-shooting-uber-driver-crime/80702074/)) from around the country involving Uber drivers. The most serious was in February, when Uber driver Jason Dalton shot and killed several people in Kalamazoo.

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