

Community Corner (/michigan/farmington-mi/around-town)

Profanity-Laced Rant on Uber Driver Could Cost U-M Student

A University of Michigan student who lost his cool with an Uber driver could lose his fraternity membership. U-M is also investigating.

By Beth Dalbey (Patch Staff) - (<http://patch.com/users/beth-dalbey>) March 29, 2016 12:19 pm ET
(<http://my.patch.com/article/26327346/edit>)

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The 33-second video of U-M student Jake Croman losing his cool was posted by the offended driver, Artur Zawada, on March 23. It had been viewed more than 612,000 times by noon Tuesday, and has generated dozens of comments.

In a statement, university spokesman Rick Fitzgerald also said:

"We expect more from members of the U-M community. 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."

Croman's fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon, is investigating and "appropriate action" could include Croman's expulsion from the U-M chapter (<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/03/28/uber-rant-um/82353960/>), national spokesman Alex Baker said in a statement published by The Detroit News:

"Tau Kappa Epsilon has begun our investigation into the video, which allegedly contains one of our members. 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."

Croman said in a statement issued through a family spokesman to BuzzFeed News that the driver sparked the tirade by making anti-Semitic remarks (<http://www.buzzfeed.com/davidmack/university-of-michigan-uber-video#.fk8l88kEw4>).

"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."

Buzzfeed News identified Croman as the son of wealthy New York City real-estate mogul Steven Croman. (<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.

*****EXPLICIT LANGUAGE WARNING: You can watch the video here***
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12VeNY-QoYA>).**

However, in a comment posted under the video, Zawada claimed he had been harassed by the student and his friends four times before, in November, December and twice in March.

Customers know from the ride-hail company's mobile app who the driver is, and Croman and his friends had the option to cancel "to avoid any issues," but they continued to abuse, harrase [sic], belittle and provoke like kindergarten thugs," he said in his comment.

In an interview with the college news network The Tab Michigan (<http://thetab.com/us/michigan/2016/03/27/video-student-caught-calling-uber-driver-a-minimum-wage-faggot-2351>), Zawada said:

"I already told him I would never take him again. He knew that but he didn't cancel the trip.

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"I pulled in I didn't even say anything to the guy, and that happened. So I pulled out my cell phone and recorded him. He should just have cancelled before I came over. They were looking for trouble. They were hoping I would lose my cool."

Zawada, who immigrated to the United States from Poland 30 years ago, told The Tab he has never encountered a reaction like that from a customer.

To see someone have complete disregard for another human being — to be abused just because they overloaded the car or they are mean or rude, I have to put a stop for it. I was shocked. I was just in disbelief."

He said he has provided 2,600 Uber rides, and "most of the time, things are fine."

"You cannot strip people of their dignity," he said. "This is my job, this is what I do."

» *Screenshots via YouTube*

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