Taunting of Uber driver in Ann Arbor goes viral

By **Guy Gordon [https://www.clickondetroit.com/author/guygordon]** - Reporter/Anchor

Posted: 6:33 PM, March 28, 2016
Updated: 6:33 PM, March 28, 2016

ANN ARBOR, Mich. - Ann Arbor Police, the University of Michigan and the ride-sharing service Uber are investigating after an Uber driver came under a profanity-laced, slur-laden attack from a U of M student.

The rant was captured on video and has since gone viral. It has nearly 400,000 views on YouTube alone. The abuser was angry because the driver refused to give him and the people with him a ride. The university is confirming it is a student making the verbal attack on the driver. The school calls it reprehensible.

RELATED CONTENT

Police questioning person of interest in Detroit Uber driver's death [/news/police-questioning-per...

Uber driver killed in Detroit [/news/uber-driver-killed-in-detroit]

Kalamazoo sheriff's office: Shooting suspect's $10 million lawsuit... [/news/kalamazoo-shooting-r...

"We don't give a (expletive) about you. There's 50 of us, one of you and I spend a lot more money than you," he's heard saying on the video.

He calls Uber driver Artur Zawada by name and uses a gay slur.

"I got insulated, I got abused, and accused of saying things I never said," said Zawada.

That student faced harsh backlash online and on campus.

"The comments are mostly vitriol against the actions, they're disgusting, they're despicable," said Omar Mahmood, editor at Michigan Review.

Zawada said he refused service because:

"This is the 4th time that I have been harassed by this rider and his friends. I requested Uber to ban him, but he was using friends' accounts."

A student identified as Jake Croman, a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, filed a police complaint against Zawada. While the university won't identify him as the abusive student, Croman told Buzzfeed:

"The video shows one side of the story. He refused to pick me up because of my religion and made anti-Semitic remarks. I am not proud of my reaction to his discrimination and regret my choice of words."

Both were interviewed by the dean of students.

"When I left the Dean there was never a mention of anti-Semitic issues. When I posted the video online, then we have the damage control and all of a sudden I became anti-Semitic," said Zawada.

We reached out to the fraternity and to Croman through his father's business where he works. We got no response. He has taken down his Facebook posts.

In the video and police reports ethnicity is not mentioned.

The University of Michigan said in a statement: "We find the actions depicted in the video to be reprehensible and completely inconsistent with our community's core values. We expect more from our students ... regardless of circumstances, no one deserves to be treated that way."

School officials met with the driver and the students last week. Action will be determined by what the police find.