

Taxi Advisory Committee Presentation:

On 28th October 2005 I was involved in a police reported matter. A taxi driver from Westway, by the name of Youssef Jaber drove into my body. I received no broken bones but soft tissue swelling across my back and abdomen. I am still receiving medical treatment for this injury to my back. My sister had called Westway and instructed them to assist her in removing furniture and belongings, from my home, without permission. She has had mental health issues in the past. My son A.J. was at home at the time alone, unbeknownst to my sister who assumed the house was empty. My son was disturbed while sleeping in his room and surprised my sister with his presence. I have detailed all the happening in a police report, which I am willing to provide copies to you for your review.

Unfortunately to this day I have not been able to receive closure or a satisfactory resolution to my case. The taxi drivers, there were two in vans one blue, one beige would not listen to my or my son's pleas. They would not cease what they were doing and refused to wait for the police to arrive.

My son had called me during the removal of furniture. I arrived on the scene, as the vans it seemed were ready to leave. They were almost completely filled with my belongings. My sister had lived at my home board and lodging free for a period extending from September 15th to 21st October 2005. On this day, she left my home, but returned one week later unannounced and unknowing to anyone in my family, with the taxi vans. All of the happenings were recorded on 911 call that I will under the freedom of information act be requesting a copy of.

The taxi driver Jaber, who drove the beige van that was filled, climbed into the taxi. My sister also climbed into this taxi. My car a blue zx cavalier was positioned at the top of my driveway, blocking the exit to the vans. As I was pleading with the driver to wait for the police he became very agitated waving his arms up and down. He was telling my sister that she had not paid him enough money. The taxi driver became more agitated with my crying and pleading. He then yelled at me "Lady I am running a business" and with this without warning he moved his van into my body. My son was positioned next to me but slightly away from the van. He was talking on the phone with a 911 dispatcher. My son grabbed me as my legs buckled under the taxi and pulled me out of the way. I was hysterical by this time, as I could not fathom that the driver had reacted like this. I think it is a fair assumption that a person could assume that the taxi driver would not mind waiting for the police, especially if they had nothing to lose. You would think that the taxi driver would welcome a resolution. The driver did not stop and sped off at high speed across my lawn and down the road. I gathered myself up and stumbled over to the blue van that had now positioned itself on my front lawn. I supported myself on the blue van and begged the driver not to move because my back was injured. The ambulance arrived and I was taken to the hospital.

I for many weeks was unable to receive my police reports concerning this incident, even though I formally requested it. Months later, I was able to receive the report, I truly believe by chance. I arrived unexpectedly at Greenbank police station. On this particular day I had the opportunity to converse with a staff member at the Freedom of Information office who advised me to go to the station, because I was entitled to receive the report. I had been repeatedly told that I was not entitled to receive it. I paid a \$30.00 fee to receive the report. To my astonishment I discovered that the information on my police report is most definitely incorrect. I have written personally to Chief Bevan and he has not addressed this matter at all in his official response. I am most happy to provide copies of any correspondence that you require concerning this matter.

The car on my report is listed as a black Impala. This is absolutely false information. What concerns me is that witness reports and my own police report and the information on the 911 tape specifically states that the vehicles involved were two vans, one blue, one beige. Another serious unease is that I want to question the other facts on the report to establish whether or not they have been presented correctly. My son gave the taxi numbers to the dispatcher.

It has been now been formerly stated to me over the phone by Constable Menard that the taxi driver involved in my occurrence was the same one who was involved in the death of Sarah McCarthy. Mr. Jaber apparently stated to Mr. Fisher, that I had faked the whole injury to myself. My hospital and medical reports will clarify that this is no way is a fake injury to my back. The cases have many similar facts. The beige van, the same driver, an agitated driver, an injury and happening, that could also have tragically resulted in a death and a death, the same taxi company and a driver that failed to stop at the scene, for police to arrive.

I had formerly called the police station the day after Sarah's death. I wanted to inform the police that I believed the same vehicle in the death of Sarah was involved in my own injury to my back. Sadly my son AJ, saw a beige Westway taxi van on the Queensway with a body bag lying beside it. He became upset because he immediately thought of my injury and circumstance one month earlier. My son had traveled early the morning of Sarah's death to pick up his girlfriend's parents car from the same parking lot that Sarah was dragged from. His girlfriend also made a decision the night of Sarah's death not to drive, because she had been drinking alcohol, therefore, she sought alternative transportation home. It is most strongly felt by myself and family that Youssef Jaber, should not even had been allowed to drive for a taxi company until after a thorough investigation. He should have been suspended from duty as a taxi driver to the public. He was a loose cannon. The taxi company should have acted and so should the police in this matter.

I strongly feel that Youssef Jaber this driver showed no respect to my life, well being in anyway shape or form and could have killed me. His actions at the scene of my home I feel clarify my strong emotion and state of mind. I informed the police and had called several times as to why my own case was not being reviewed before Sarah's death. My husband had also called Westway to request a response of my happening from the President of the company. To date no call has ever been made to any member of my family from Westway Company.

It has been extremely difficult to receive any information concerning my case. There have been unacceptable long delays and unacceptable happenings, both prior to Sarah's death and after. As a citizen I feel that I deserved better cooperation and treatment service industry. At times the police and bylaw have been unsympathetic and overly assertive. I was questioned most aggressively by both Constable Menard and by an Ottawa Bylaw officer. Statements have been made, that are completely improper separately. A formal complaint with Chief Bevan and Ottawa Bylaw Services will be made.

Originally the police told me after long delays that no formal charges would be laid against Youssef Jaber. I was told also that I could pursue a complaint with Ottawa Bylaw Services. However, police reports, which Constable Menard refused to give me even after the investigation was complete.

When I finally received my report months later, Ottawa Bylaw Services informed me that they would not even consider a complaint. They stated this because the taxi driver no longer worked for the company. Who then will be accountable for the taxi company allowing my home to be robbed? Is what happened at my home a normal service that taxi companies provide? Are they insured moving companies? Is it acceptable for a taxi company to move chest of drawers, tables, mattresses ect.? I thought members of the public were only supposed to be transported with reasonable items such as luggage. Who will be answerable for my injury that I am still receiving treatment for now? Who will be accountable for the wrong information on my report? How was my case presented to the crown if the information on the report is abhorrently incorrect? It is clearly understood that a taxi driver needs protection and accountability from the public. However, we the public need protection and accountability from the taxi industry.

What are we going to do for Sarah? Is her death in vain? Can we accept the transgression for not learning from this tragedy? Are we prepared to backslide? There must be hope in the system we have. It is apparent our community is in distress. Your committee is here for a purpose. Who do you speak for, if it is not the community? Why would these happenings make you say no problem exists? You have been given the authority to act. Yet if you fail to do so, then what use is this committee? You sit here representing the community. You bear Sarah's name on your minds. I think it is most important that you as a board reflect on these happenings that are being brought to your attention. It would be honourable to the community to focus on these matters. Should you ignore them whom indeed are you doing any justice for?

I ask you to serve the well being of the people of this community. Do you not hear as I as a mother hear Sarah's cry? Don't offer the community solutions that do not change the existing problems. Do you think the community will now accept this? Is it your responsibility and duty to do what is right. The community will accept that mistakes have been made. They will acknowledge that cracks can happen within the system, but will honour and appreciate your being if you listen to the words of the people who are talking.

Your decisions can play a role in defining this board. Are you willing not to act and leave the system as it stands until another tragedy occurs? Do we want to see another funeral revealing a terrible tragedy that could have been avoided by some wise persons making decisions? The community has been through enough. Do not reject the people of this community as they sit before you. Listen and be wise and humble. Our community can be healed. Good can come from this.

I ask that you use your position on this board. You have made a commitment to the community to serve on this board. Please do not break it. I hope you will do what is right, what is honourable.

Deborah Rose