



Crime

Uber Driver Allegedly Kidnapped L.A. Club-Goer, Took Her to Motel

By Dennis Romero

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Categories: Crime



Uber

Updated at the bottom: Police say the victim was fondled outside her clothes. Uber responds.

A 26-year-old female clubgoer was allegedly kidnapped by an Uber driver and taken to a motel in Panorama City, police said today.

The driver, identified as 32-year-old Frederick Dencer of Encino, was booked on suspicion of kidnapping for the purpose of sexual assault. However, cops did not allege that a sexual assault actually took place.

The story starts outside **Greystone Manor** in West Hollywood early yesterday, according to an LAPD statement:

The victim was drunk, and a nightclub worker asked the driver to take her home, police said.

As such, the ride was off-the-books - there was no record of it, as would normally be the case with Uber's app, according to cops. Lt. Paul Vernon says the driver allegedly ...

.... took advantage of the situation, and drove her to a cheap motel, which he had visited before, and carried her into the room. He slept the night in the room, and when she awoke, he let her leave, though he asked her to stay, according to the victim.

The woman woke up next to the shirtless stranger, left ("He let her leave," Vernon said), and went to a Panorama City 7-Eleven, where she called police at 6 a.m. yesterday, the LAPD stated.

Cops say she was able to point out the motel in question, the **Panorama Motel**, where officers say they found the suspect still there.

The woman's phone was dead, so it was difficult to determine if she had called Uber to get to the Manor that night, police said. Cops ~~think~~ **say she thought** she did take an Uber ride at one point during a night club-hopping.



Vernon says:

Dencer answered questions but his story didn't make sense. Once the officers watched video from the motel, they realized the victim was carried into the motel, and that didn't jive with Dencer's several stories.

... It looks like he made a rash decision to take advantage of a vulnerable woman, and he's not the first man to try that. The irony is, the victim was trying to be responsible by calling for a ride, but she unwittingly put herself in another vulnerable situation. Hopefully, others will learn from this, and thankfully she was not assaulted or injured.

We called to determine more about any alleged sexual contact but were unable to get through. We also reached out to Uber for its response but no one got back to us.

Dencer was being held in lieu of \$1 million bail.

See also: ***Uber's \$357 Crosstown L.A. Ride Highlights Controversial 'Surge Pricing'***

[Added at 3:12 p.m.] Earlier this year an Uber driver in Washington, D.C. was accused of raping a 20-year-old customer, but **charges were not filed** and he was released.

In February a 26-year-old woman said she was **briefly kidnapped by an Uber driver**, also in Washington, D.C.

[Added at 4:02 p.m.] Vernon told us a sexual assault didn't take place, but that the victim told police this:

By her description he fondled her over her clothes and suggested he wanted to have sex, but he didn't force it.

But cops believe the suspect intended to do more. Vernon:

When you think of a man who takes a very drunk woman into a car, she can't express where she lives, he continues to drive around and drives her miles away from her home, from his home, to a very cheap motel frequented by prostitutes and drug users, checks in, and carries her into the room, which we see on video, this leads to the intent of what he wanted to do.

Vernon warned club-goers that even if they're trying to be responsible by using a ride-share app, they need to be conscious:

You're not helping yourself if your going to party to the extent where you can't express where you live. The fare was solicited by a valet there who was trying to help this woman because she was so drunk and wanted to go home. He [the suspect] never reported the fare to his company.

The driver, Vernon said, ultimately fell asleep in the motel room.

[Added at 4:56 p.m.] Uber released this **statement**:

Uber became aware this afternoon of a serious incident in Los Angeles. The facts are unknown at this stage and it's certainly unclear that this is an Uber-related incident, as the driver in question was not logged in, connected to or operating on the platform at the time. We have reached out to authorities and will work with them to help uncover the facts. It is also our policy to immediately suspend a driver's account following any serious allegations, which we have done. Nothing is more important to Uber than the safety of our riders.

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