



## Rape Victim Suing Lyft For Failing to Screen Out Driver Who Attacked Her

*Criminal Background Check Could Have Protected Her, says Jane Doe*

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**(Chicago:** Nov. 08, 2017) A plaintiff identified as Jane Doe filed suit in Cook County Circuit Court today against ride-hailing service company Lyft, alleging that Lyft failed to screen out a driver with a criminal history who subsequently sexually assaulted her last summer.

Tim Tomasik, attorney for the plaintiff, spoke about the case at his downtown office. “The traumatic event my client experienced should serve as a wakeup call to all Chicagoans and the millions of people across the country who use Lyft and other ride sharing services. You have to ask yourself whether you really know who is driving you —and the truth is that right now it’s impossible to know.”

Doe’s suit alleges that on July 7, 2017, Lyft driver Angelo McCoy accepted her ride via the Lyft app, then drove her in his car to a secluded alley where he threatened her with a knife, zip-tied her hands, and repeatedly sexually assaulted her, holding her captive for two hours. Doe later escaped at a North Side intersection, jumping out of the car.

McCoy had been hired as a Lyft driver despite his criminal history, including charges of theft, driving under the influence, and possession of weapons.

“After I escaped and received treatment,” Jane Doe said in a statement, “I was outraged to learn that there were dozens of women across the country who have been sexually assaulted by Lyft or other ride-share drivers. I am not only seeking justice for myself through this lawsuit but making it my mission to prevent other passengers, especially women, from being victimized by Lyft or other ride-share drivers.”

The safety of ride-hailing services has been in the news recently due to the release of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s ride-hailing study, conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago. While the study analyzed monthly citation and arrest records of ride-hailing service drivers, it did not address the question of whether drivers should be fingerprinted and subjected to the same comprehensive background checks traditional taxi drivers face.

“Fingerprinting is just one of several simple steps Lyft and other ride-hailing services are failing to take to properly vet their drivers and keep customers safe,” said Tomasik.

Lyft’s applicant screening and employee oversight processes do not verify documents such as vehicle registration and driver’s licenses, require no vehicle or road tests, and do not monitor whether drivers are under the influence of alcohol or carrying weapons. The company currently outsources background checks to a third-party vendor, Sterling Talent Solutions, which came under fire in Chicago last month in a separate incident for approving the hiring of a driver with a federal conviction for aiding terrorism.

City officials have demanded that Lyft get a new vendor to perform background checks and conduct audits on current drivers.

Other ride-sharing services, including Uber, are facing similar issues. The driver responsible for the Oct. 31 terror attack in New York, Sayfullo Habibullaevic worked for Uber and passed a background check, the company said. And another Uber driver, Jason Brian Dalton, allegedly shot eight people in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dalton, too, is reported to have passed the company’s screening process.

“Ride-hailing companies have seen enormous growth in profits within the last few years,” Tomasik said, “in large part because they have taken little responsibility for screening applicants and supervising drivers. That has to change.”

Tim Tomasik is a trial lawyer with extensive experience in dealing with the transportation industry. He has won numerous verdicts in matters holding trucking companies, hospitals and taxi companies liable for the conduct of alleged independent contractors, including a \$26 million verdict against Yellow Cab, where the jury found that the alleged independent contractor driver was an agent of Yellow Cab. That verdict was affirmed by the Illinois appellate court earlier this year.