

Massachusetts man accused of raping woman who thought he was her Uber driver

Police in Massachusetts are offering tips/caution when using ride share apps after a man is being accused of a disturbing crime.

A Worcester man is being held on \$10,000 bail after being charged in Boston Municipal Court Central Division with raping a woman who thought he was her Uber driver early Saturday morning in Downtown Boston, Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden announced.

29-year-old Qabel Najeeb was charged with one count of rape and ordered to wear a GPS bracelet and observe a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew if he posts bail. He will return to court November 15 for a probable cause hearing.

On Saturday at about 4:47 a.m. Boston police responded to Border Street in East Boston and spoke with a woman who told them that she ordered an Uber when leaving a downtown nightclub several hours earlier. The original Uber then was cancelled. The woman, 32, said she then entered another car she thought was an Uber. The driver, later identified as Najeeb, drove past Boston Common and then pulled over among some buildings near Storrow Drive. There the driver raped the woman. After the assault, he dropped the victim off on Border Street.

Investigators used video surveillance and descriptions provided by the victim to identify the car, a blue Toyota Corolla, and the driver, Najeeb. Najeeb was arrested on Sunday.

“This is a terrifying incident involving a woman who entered a

vehicle with the full understanding that she was going to be delivered home in safety and a driver who took advantage of the victim and the situation. This is the beginning of the process of seeking justice, and we will stay beside this victim during and after this difficult time,” Hayden said.

The Worcester Police Department advises community members to use caution when using ride sharing apps. To avoid individuals posing as Uber or Lyft drivers, please do the following:

1. Make sure that the driver’s face and license plate match up with what is seen on the app. Ask the driver to confirm his or her name and make the driver tell you who he or she is picking up.
2. When possible, travel together. If this is not possible, tell a friend or loved one.
3. Sit in the backseat, not the front.
4. Trust your instincts. If something feels “off,” it probably is.
5. Have your cell phone handy in case you have to call 911.

The victims of any crime, including domestic or sexual violence, should call 911 in an emergency. SafeLink, a statewide DV hotline, can be reached at 877-785-2020. SafeLink is answered by trained advocates 24/7 in English, Spanish and Portuguese, as well as TTY at 870-521-2601. It also has the capacity to provide multilingual translation in more than 140 languages. Help is also available at www.janedoe.org/findhelp.

Help is also available for members of our LGBTQ+ community experiencing domestic or intimate partner violence through The Network/La Red by calling 617-742-4911 or 800-832-1901.