



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Lyft Driver Attacked by Passenger due to Anger over Plastic Partition Installed for COVID-19 Protection

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) responded to the intersection of Belle Terre Parkway and Royal Palm Parkway early Sunday morning just after midnight after receiving calls regarding a fight in the street.

Deputies arrived to find two males physically fighting. One male, later identified as 36-year-old Travis S. Smith (DOB 12/10/1983), was on top of another male restricting his movement. Deputies separated the two and conducted individual interviews to determine what had occurred.

Smith, who was visibly intoxicated, told deputies that he, his friend and the friend's 7-year-old child were traveling home from Flagler Beach to Rockne Lane by a Lyft driver when the Lyft driver began driving recklessly. In order to protect himself and his friends, Smith said he grabbed the driver and forced him to pull over which is when the physical altercation spilled over into the street.

The Lyft driver told deputies that Smith suddenly attacked him while he was driving the passengers home. He said that Smith pulled down a plastic partition that was installed due to the COVID-19 virus and put the driver in a chokehold causing him to lose control of the vehicle. The two exited the vehicle with the car still in drive and began to fight in the street while the driver called for passersby to call police. The driver also told deputies that he has a dash camera in his vehicle that records the interior of the vehicle as well as the road.

Deputies reviewed the dash camera footage that captured the interior of the vehicle and saw the events matched exactly as the Lyft driver had described. The dash camera footage can be viewed here: [YouTube](#) **Warning: Video contains graphic images and foul language.**

Witnesses at the intersection called 9-1-1 to report the physical altercation. If you see something suspicious occurring, please call FCSO at 386-313-4911. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.

"This was a very dangerous situation for not only the people inside the vehicle but for the other

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motorists on the roadway,” Sheriff Rick Staly said. “This drunk attacked an innocent driver and put numerous lives in danger. These rider-share services can quickly become dangerous and drivers should be cautious of who they let in their vehicle. Thankfully the video recording device captured the entire incident and he went to jail.”

The Lyft driver suffered minor injuries during the altercation, including a hematoma on the side of his forehead. Smith was arrested and charged with Battery and Child Abuse, due to putting the 7-year-old life’s in jeopardy during the attack in a moving vehicle. Smith was booked into the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility and released after posting a \$7,500 bond.

Deputies gave the other passenger and his 7-year-old child a courtesy ride to a local hotel.

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