

# Delhi woman sues Uber for 'negligence and fraud' after alleged rape

[Dominic Rushe](#) in New York Thursday 29 January 2015 19:01 EST

- Service essentially ‘modern day electronic hitchhiking’, says lawyer
- Says he hopes lawsuit will protect others facing ‘serious risks’ from company



An [Uber](#) passenger in Delhi suffered a “horrific and brutal rape” due to the controversial taxi app company’s “inadequate and disingenuous commitment to safety”, according to a suit filed in US federal court on Thursday.

Lawyers for the unnamed passenger, who was reportedly sexually assaulted and beaten by an Uber driver late last year, filed the suit in the Northern District of [California](#).

Uber’s “negligence, fraud and other unlawful actions caused plaintiff’s sexual assault, which has humiliated, degraded, violated and robbed plaintiff of her dignity,” the suit states.

The plaintiff's lawyer, Douglas Wigdor of New York-based Wigdor, said: "Uber's focus on its bottom line over the safety of its passengers has resulted in what can only be described as modern day electronic hitchhiking.

"We hope that this lawsuit will bring about positive change that will ultimately protect people worldwide who are unaware of the serious risks of entering into an [Uber](#) car."

Wigdor lawyer Jeanne Christensen said a decision by Uber executives to cut costs "at the expense of customer safety forced our client to pay the ultimate cost in New Delhi, [India](#). Her brutal rape by an Uber driver who was a known repeat sexual predator was a result of a global Uber policy that has far-reaching consequences. We intend to hold Uber accountable for violence that could easily have been avoided had even a minimal background check been conducted."

According to the suit, the plaintiff used Uber to book her ride home from a restaurant on 5 December. Instead of taking her home, the driver, named as Shiv Kumar Yadav, drove her to a secluded area and assaulted her. The complaint alleges that Uber failed to adequately screen Yadav, who it claims had provided "fraudulent documentation and false information."

After the attack, Uber's co-founder and chief executive, Travis Kalanick, said Uber would "do everything, I repeat, everything, to help bring this perpetrator to justice and to support the victim and her family in her recovery."

But the suit alleges that Uber, despite knowing the victim's identity, has "shunned and avoided all contact with Ms Doe and her family", ignored her requests to be involved in new safety standards, and "boasted" about re-opening its service in India.

"To pour salt on plaintiff's fresh wounds, Uber even taunted plaintiff by directly sending her an email announcing this news, and outrageously offering her a discount to begin riding with Uber again" according to the suit.

India is Uber's largest market outside the United States. The rape allegation triggered protests and [led to a ban on the service in Delhi](#). Taxi-hailing apps must now ensure cabs have panic buttons and tracking devices installed in their vehicles.

The taxi app is currently valued at more than \$40bn, making it the most valuable of the new "sharing economy" tech companies. But while investors

have poured money into the rapidly expanding company, Uber has been mired in controversy. Among other controversies, the company is being [sued in San Francisco](#) by the family of a six-year-old girl who was killed by an Uber driver, drivers have been accused of refusing rides to disabled passengers and Senator Al Franken has quizzed the company over its approach to privacy.

An Uber spokesperson said: “Our deepest sympathies remain with the victim of this horrific crime. We are cooperating fully with the authorities to ensure the perpetrator is brought to justice.”