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Public Safety

An Uber driver was asked to take a woman home. He drove her to a motel instead, police say.

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By Lynh Bui

An Uber driver has been arrested on kidnapping and assault charges after he took an unconscious female customer to a Maryland motel instead of dropping her at her home, police said.

The man is seen on a motel surveillance video pulling the woman from the back seat of a car and carrying her motionless body to a room, then staying in the motel for some time before leaving, police charging documents state.

Westagne Pierre, 29 of Greenbelt, was arrested Thursday and has also been charged with theft after he used the woman's credit card, according to a statement of charges from Prince George's County Police.

Esteban Gergely, an attorney for Pierre, said his client denies there was lack of consent the evening he took the woman to the motel.

The incident began Oct. 18 when the woman experienced an alcohol-induced "blackout" in the District, charging records state. A friend of the woman called an Uber for her and requested she be transported to her home in Fairfax County, Va., the records said.

An Uber driver identified as "Westagne" took the woman from the District to her home, but then drove her to a Budget Inn in College Park, Md., police said.

Surveillance video at the motel shows the driver went to the lobby and paid for a room.

"Surveillance video then shows the Defendant go back to his vehicle and pull the Victim out of the back seat," charging documents said. "The Defendant then lifts the Victim into the air, and wraps his arms around her so her feet are not touching the ground."

The man carries the woman into a motel room and spends time in the room before leaving and heading to a nearby 7-Eleven where he bought various items with the woman's credit card, police said.

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Authorities arrested the man after matching images of him from surveillance video at the motel and 7-Eleven with a driver's license photo, charging documents said.

Gergely said Pierre was released from custody after paying \$250 in bond, which was lowered substantially from the \$150,000 to be originally posted. Gergely said the reduced bond reflects lack of strong evidence in the case.

"The facts of the case are very peculiar and they fall extremely short of being incriminating," Gergely said. "There were no facts in the statement of charges that suggested he did any injury or trauma."

Gergely said that at a bail hearing Friday the judge questioned whether there was enough probable cause to detain his client.

"She's saying she doesn't remember anything," Gergely said. "If she doesn't remember anything, she certainly doesn't remember saying, 'I don't want these things to happen.'"

Uber confirmed Friday that the company contacted police and removed the driver from the app as soon as the rider reported concerns to the company on Oct. 19.

"This is deeply upsetting," Uber spokeswoman Brooke Anderson said. "The driver has been banned from the app and we have been working closely with police to support the investigation."

Read more:

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