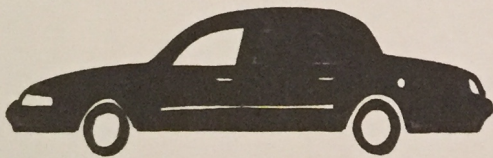


THE CAB DRIVER

"I'm waiting for my kids to get older, and then I'll get on to truck driving—local, interstate, anything is fine," says Yolanda Denise Riggins-Maddox. "I was always fascinated by driving trucks from a young age. I've been to school for truck driving and have a chauffeur permit and a limo tag."

A native Atlantan, Riggins-Maddox comes across as your next-door neighbor, friendly and approachable. These are traits that probably hold her in good stead on the job, driving clients and managing her own business, Yolanda's Transport.



"It's a male-dominated industry," she says, one that she learned about as a dispatcher with a local taxi company before working with them as a driver and eventually going out on her own. "When I started ten years ago, there were very few women...but times are changing."

Riggins-Maddox has her regular clientele, but she also drives her gleaming black 2008 Ford Expedition for Uber as filler on slow days. "I'd rather be doing something than nothing," she explains.

Among her customers are business executives, partying college kids, celebrities, and the cast and crew of *The Walking Dead*. Inside her 7-seater, she offers passengers mints, water, and even customized music playlists. Clients of a certain ilk are offered beer and wine.

"The thing with transportation is, you never know where the money comes from. There's no guarantee of a daily minimum income, you know?" she says, shrugging. "Every season has its highs and lows, it's a hustle. The highest traffic is New Year's and Halloween, and I look forward to it."

Living with her husband and two sons, aged ten and sixteen, in the Southside, work takes her all around Atlanta and its surrounding regions. She now knows the area like the back of her hand.

A self-proclaimed night owl, she enjoys the action that evenings bring, despite a few harrowing experiences. "A long time ago," she pauses. "A couple of drunk guys tried grabbing at me, but one of them wasn't as drunk as the others and restrained his friends," she remembers.

"Another time about five years ago, I had this gut feeling the passengers in my cab were just not right and politely requested to transfer them to another cab. They were fine with it, but just as they exited, I quickly caught sight of guns on their person."

Another lowlight: being called a nigger by a passenger. But the nicer moments outnumber the bad ones. "People are grateful. Especially at night, they value my services. Women and gay clients prefer female drivers. I value their business in return."

Words by Ruksana Hussain

THE CARRIAGE DRIVER



Conversation with the carriage drivers in Central Park takes on a peculiar cadence. The first noticeable absence is eye contact, as the drivers are always on the lookout for new customers. Well attuned to the rhythm of the crosswalks that send fresh batches of tourists to their curbs, they're quick to spot a potential client and may zip away from you mid-sentence. Time is money.

It's a learned rhythm, not unlike the ones the horses develop after spending time alongside their human companions. Helio Leite wagers that the requisite amount of time for a horse and driver to become properly adjusted to one another is two years. "We like to keep the horses and drivers together as teams," he says.

Charlie, the horse he's currently paired with, has only been with him for five months, and accordingly, has yet to learn his driver's habits. "He'll get there," Leite says with a knowing smile.

For a man with more than twenty-three years of experience under his belt, he's surprisingly free of nostalgia. "The park is nicer now," he says, than when he first started. Cleaner, safer, and better for giving tours.

As for the clientele, they're still the same, perhaps more plentiful—but he can't say for sure. When asked how many rides he gives per day, he says, "That's the last thing I pay attention to, the last thing I





RUKSANA HUSSAIN

Atlanta, GA

Fun fact: “Can speak Tamil, but don’t read it. Can read Arabic, but don’t speak it.”

Best money I ever spent:
“The AP stylebook—it’s a lifesaver every time.”