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Moscow Taxi Driver Drugs Passenger With Tainted Beer, Robs Him

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A Moscow taxi driver used a tainted beer to drug an unsuspecting passenger and rob him, municipal police allege, Interfax news agency reported Sunday.

The 24-year-old passenger, from the Siberian city of Barnaul, hailed a cab near Moscow's Planernaya metro station. He accepted a beer the driver had offered him under the pretext the latter was celebrating his granddaughter's birthday, Interfax reported.

The next day, the passenger woke up in a hospital ward. His wallet, his electronic tablet and the violin he had been carrying had all been stolen, the report said. The total damages were assessed at about 25,000 rubles (about $444).

The beer reportedly contained clozapine, a drug used to treat schizophrenia and other personality disorders.

The 40-year-old suspect was later apprehended and now faces robbery charges, Interfax reported.

It remains unclear whether the suspect was a so-called "gypsy taxi" driver — an unlicensed entrepreneur who picks up passengers in his own car for extra cash — or whether he worked for an official taxi company.

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