



CONSUMER NEWS

Rental Car Safety Advocate Lauds *The Washington Post* for Exposing Travel Industry's "Weakest Link"

Texas Attorney General Proves Ineffective in Addressing Consumer Threat

[For Release April 15, 2003] Today's *Washington Post* exposes a hidden hazard to consumers, drawing information from popular corporate trainer Frank Whyte's nightmarish experience with a defective rental car. Whyte is praising *The Post* for bringing the vital issue of rental car safety into the public spotlight.

"It's impressive that *The Post* is willing to unveil a consumer hazard that elected officials won't confront," Whyte said. "This issue needs to reach the public before the vacation season begins."

A frequent business traveler who fell victim to a defective rental car in November of last year, Whyte now is spearheading a campaign to increase vigilance over the rental car industry.

In November of 2002, the El Paso (Texas) office of Advantage Rent-a-Car supplied Whyte with a car with a defective tire—and no jack. Unaware of the dangers hidden in that rental car, Whyte drove it through New Mexico's desolate, snow-covered Sacramento Mountains at night.

Whyte's Advantage Rent-a-Car encounter compelled him to work toward rental car safety and regulatory vigilance. He has taken his case to the media, largely because government agencies have washed their hands of the rental car industry.

"There is no oversight over rental cars," Whyte said. "It's disappointing that, when a public safety hazard is brought to a state Attorney General's attention, the most you can expect from the 'People's Advocate' is a 37¢ form letter."

Whyte's search for regulatory intervention against Advantage Rent-a-Car hit a roadblock when Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's Office proclaimed helplessness, writing, "we must rely on the voluntary cooperation of both parties to resolve consumer complaints."

Whyte has since written to the Attorneys General in the other eight states in which Advantage Rent-a-Car does business, hoping and trusting that some of those officials are more effective than Texas' Abbott in pursuing minimum standards for public safety in rental cars.

"Public officials need to recognize that rental cars aren't regulated, aren't inspected, and in some cases, aren't safe," Whyte says. "When rental car accidents show-up in the news, I hope these officials will hold news conferences to apologize for their irresponsibility."

Don Oldenburg's *Consummate Consumer* column in *The Washington Post* uncovers rental car safety deficiencies, which Whyte describes as the "untamed wilderness" of business travel and family tourism. Oldenburg's column is available online at www.washingtonpost.com.

Read Frank Whyte's Account of His Rental Car Ordeal: www.tsod.com/rentalcar

Note:

Neither Frank Whyte nor his company (Training Services On Demand, Inc.) has a financial interest in rental car safety: This issue is brought forward by Dr. Whyte solely to enhance public safety.