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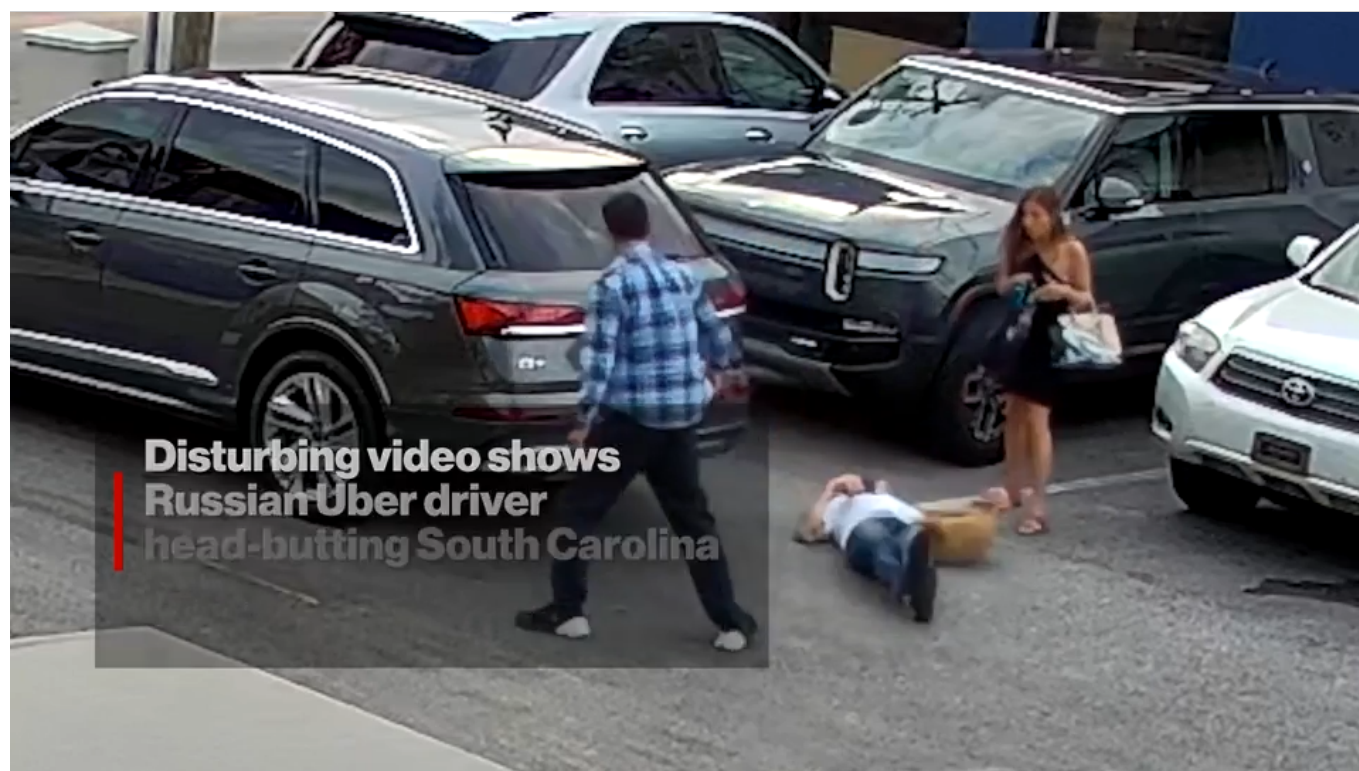
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Shocking video shows CEO with service dog being knocked out by illegal Russian Uber driver

By **Ariel Zilber** and **Natalie O'Neill**

Published Aug. 21, 2025, 2:18 p.m. ET

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A Russian Uber driver working illegally in the US was caught on camera head-butting a South Carolina CEO as he held his service dog, leaving the knocked-out rider with a brain injury, according to the victim and a new lawsuit.

Charleston-based CEO Bryan Kobel, 45, canceled a ride home from a French restaurant, Maison, in April because the driver refused to take his service dog, Kobel told The Post on Thursday.

Disturbing surveillance footage shows the driver — identified as Vadim Uliumdzhiev, 42 —

suddenly marching over and knocking out Kobel as he holds his 17-pound golden doodle in the parking lot.

“The next thing I know, I’m waking up in a hospital bed with seven staples in my head and four stitches,” Kobel said. “It’s been a brutal experience to this day.”



Uber driver Vadim Uliumdzhev was arrested for assault.

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Kobel, who is the CEO of a biotech company, suffered a concussion, amnesia, and scarring— and soon learned from cops the driver had gotten the Uber job with a fake license, he said.

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"Uber has to take more **accountability for its drivers**," he said. "They're opening the door to mayhem."

Kobel said he had just asked the driver if his service dog was allowed in the car and the driver responded "no."

When he told the driver to cancel the ride, in an interaction Kobel described as "innocuous," the driver attacked him — and his memory went black, Kobel said.

An onlooker is shown in footage snapping a photo of Uliumdzhiev's driver's plate, and a dramatic 911 call ensued.





The driver was captured on camera head-butting and knocking out Bryan Kobel.

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“He’s bleeding very badly in the back of the head, we’re going to need an ambulance,” the caller said, according to 911 audio.

Uliumdzhiev was later arrested for assault and battery, records show. Immigration and Customs Enforcement then placed a hold on him, and he was transferred to a federal ICE processing center in Folkston, Ga., after posting a \$10,000 bond for the assault, [the Post and Courier noted](#).

In the weeks that followed, Kobel struggled to remember words and stumbled over phrases due to his brain injury.

“My job involves a lot of public speaking and I was unsure whether I would be able to do that again,” he said.

“I wondered, ‘Am I ever going to be the person I was before, and that’s a very scary thought,’ he said.

Kobel is now suing Uber for unspecified financial damage — but his ultimate goal is to get the company to better protect its riders, he said.

“Uber hides behind a thin veil of legalese to protect their riders,” he said. “Frankly, it’s fake.”

“The company needs to make substantial changes on how it protects riders,” he said.

The lawsuit, filed last week in Charleston County Court, notes the Uber driver “posed an unreasonable risk of harm” and that Uber failed “to implement and enforce reasonable safety policy.”

Uber sent a statement condemning the attack on Thursday, but didn’t specify how Uliumdzhiev

slipped through the cracks.

“There is no place for violence on the Uber platform,” the company said. “While we can’t comment on pending litigation, Uber is deeply committed to safety and complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations around worker eligibility.”

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Uber added that it screens drivers with a criminal background check and requiring a social security number and driver’s license.

The firm didn’t immediately respond to The Post’s questions about whether it plans to change any of its policies around the screenings.

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